Globalization and Religious Nationalism in India

The search for ontological security

Catarina Kinnvall

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This book explores the relationship between globalization, security and religious nationalism in India. It argues that globalization has made individuals and groups more ontologically insecure and existentially uncertain – an uncertainty many people try to reduce by searching for new secure self-identities. In this war of emotions, paramount figures are seeking to rally people around simple, rather than complex, causes. Religion and nationalism are two such causes that are more likely than other identity constructions to provide answers to those in need, due to their ability to convey a picture of security, inclusion, stability and simple answers.

The book puts forward a new approach to interpret identity construction, which is seen as an individualized process, where interactions of the global and the local are intimately implicated. Thereby, a psychological analysis of how increased insecurity affects individuals' and groups' attachments to religious nationalism in an era of globalization is presented. The author compares the differing experiences of Sikh and Hindu nationalism, explaining why Hindus have been much more successful in fusing nationalist and religious concerns in their attempts to provide secure self-identities.

Developing an innovative angle on a significant issue of concern in the politics of South Asia, and much more broadly in the context of the contemporary world and developing global politics, this book is a valuable addition to normative critical social theory and the debate on identity and culture in political science and international relations, appealing to an inter-disciplinary audience.

Catarina Kinnvall is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, Lund University, Sweden. Her research interests include international relations theory and political psychology, focusing on globalization and religious nationalism in Asia. Her recent publications include *Globalization and Democratization in Asia: The Construction of Identity* (with Kristina Jönsson, ed).

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To Samira and Noél

Contents

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Abbreviations

AIFODR	All India Federation of Organisations for Democratic Rights
AISSF	All India Sikh Student Federation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BMS	Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh
BSP	Bahujan Samajwadi Party
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CPM	Communist Party of India
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSC	Hindu Student Council
HSS	Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISYF	The International Sikh Youth Federation
MNC	Multinational Company
NCERT	National Council of Education, Research and Training
NRI	Non-Resident Indians
RCPM	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policies
SCT	Social Categorization Theory
SGPC	Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SJM	Swadeshi Renaissance Organization
UCC	Uniform Civil Code
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
VHPA	Vishwa Hindu Parishad America
VHPI	Vishwa Hindu Parishad International
WSO	World Sikh Organization

Part I

Introduction

Introduction

> Globes make my head spin. By the time I locate the place, they have changed the boundaries.
>
> (McLuhan 2001:1, graffiti at the JNU in Delhi)

Religious rhetoric and nationalist discourses have increasingly dominated the public debate in India and elsewhere. In response to rapidly changing socio-economic and political realities, discourses of religion, tradition and the nation have been used by political leaders to unite otherwise diverse groups. Various processes of globalization, migration and multicultural policies have impacted on the extent to which religious nationalism has become a predominant means of identification in societies all over the world. Discourses related to 'the war on terror', following September 11, have furthermore served to intensify this occurrence and we see an increasing tendency among political and religious leaders to accentuate religion and nationalism as common denominators for large groups of people. In this sense, September 11 and its aftermath continue to play a defining role in world politics.

The introduction of terrorist acts in India and elsewhere has, for instance, affected security perceptions among large groups of people as previously unrelated concepts of refugees, terrorism, anti-government demonstrations, crime, poverty and Islamic fundamentalism are suddenly being grouped together. Heightened tension at international airports is affecting all travellers, but some more than others as non-Westerners come under constant scrutiny. Those risking their lives to escape the economic and political hardship of their countries in search of a better life for themselves and their children are increasingly denied access to Western societies. And national governments are responding to their citizens' concern for tightened security and the closing of borders to immigrants and refugees. As a consequence, anti-immigration language has become the norm among politicians who wish to mobilize opinion in favour of their own policies.

In other words, the globalization of economics and politics is being felt among ordinary citizens as time and space are being compressed and as events elsewhere, real or imagined, are becoming increasingly localized. A globalized world is for many a world devoid of certainty, of knowing what tomorrow holds. It is a

world where many people feel intensified levels of insecurity as the life they used to lead is being both contested and changed at the same time. Globalization challenges simple definitions of who we are and where we come from. A number of factors related to globalization seem to increase the gaps between those who have reaped the benefits of the global market and those who have been left behind. And it is noticeable how democratizing forces often threaten traditional structures in many societies, leaving some feeling uneasy about the value of these procedures. Fear of losing work, status or other privileges is constantly felt and has engendered the growth of new local identities in response to the effects of the global market and global policies.

The destabilizing effects of globalization obviously predate the September 11 event as this book intends to illustrate, but we will find it difficult to understand this event and others like it unless we grasp the structural conditions of insecurity related to globalization. As individuals feel vulnerable, insecure and experience existential anxiety, it is not uncommon for them to wish to re-affirm a threatened self-identity – to *securitize subjectivity*. Any collective identity that can provide such security is a potential pole of attraction. It is a war of emotions, where world leaders and other paramount figures are seeking to rally people around simple, rather than complex, causes. As rallying points some of these causes seem to have more powerful appeal than others. Nationalism and religion are two such causes, or 'identity-signifiers', that are more likely than other identity constructions to provide answers to those in need. As argued here, nationalism and religion supply particularly powerful stories and beliefs because of their ability to convey a picture of security, stability and simple answers. They do this by being portrayed as resting on solid ground, as being *true*, thus creating a sense that the world really is what it appears to be.

What this book intends to do is to tell a theoretical and empirical story that throws light on the structural conditions of insecurity in the light of globalization and to explore the extent to which religion and nationalism act as particularly powerful responses to such insecurity. Understanding the power of nationalist and religious discourse has been part of my general interest in exploring the theoretical fray of the globalization and identity literature. Moving from a deep interest in Indian politics, society and culture, I have come to develop a more general concern with issues of self, identity, the construction of others, (in)security, the mobilization of groups and the impact of globalization on all these issues and processes (see Kinnvall 2002a,b, 2003, 2004a,b, Kinnvall and Jönsson 2002). In doing this, the focus on India has by no means been divorced from the theoretical quest, but has rather served to inform and develop my theoretical understanding. Travelling around the towns and villages of Northern India, interviewing people across class, caste, gender, religion, region and age simply made me doubt any uncomplicated views of identity.

Why, for instance, did the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya serve as a unifier for Hindu nationalism while the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar only resulted in disparate calls for a separate Punjabi state? Why did so many of the people I interviewed identify themselves with their caste, village or

region before being a Sikh, a Hindu or an Indian? And why did it seem (and still does), so much easier to transform Hindu nationalism into a 'trump card' identity, overruling all other identity constructions than has been the case for Sikh nationalism? Also, how can we explain the emotions involved in these processes, the feelings of hate, affection, hopelessness or joy that were present in the stories told by those I interviewed? And, what role has globalization (broadly defined) played for the ways in which certain identity constructions have come to override all others?

These are questions which together problematize any simple explanations of globalization and identity conflict. The central aim of this book is thus to study the relationship between processes of globalization, (in)security, identity conflict and religious nationalism. The Indian society has been my point of departure for the theoretical argument and is also the focus of the case study. The questions I attempt to answer are: how and why globalization is likely to give rise to feelings of insecurity; how people try to overcome such feelings of insecurity by searching for new secure identities – the *securitization of subjectivity* – and what happens to notions of self and other within this process, and finally, the extent to which religion and nationalism, in combination, are more likely than other identity constructions to provide these new secure identities?

An outline of the book

The book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of the introduction. The second part is mainly theoretical and is focused on the relationship between globalization, (in)security and religious nationalism, while the third part is centred on India with a special emphasis on, and comparison of, Sikh and Hindu identity constructions in the light of globalization. In the second part I proceed from a general discussion of globalization, modernity and postmodernity. Here, I spell out the effects of globalization and its relationship to (in)security and multiculturalism, highlighting how security works as a 'thick signifier' and how it can only be understood in relation to those power structures within which security is embedded. Globalization must, in other words, be conceptualized in ontological and existential terms. This is the subject of chapter one.

In chapter two I take the analysis one step further by providing a psychoanalytic account of what happens to notions of self and other within this process of increased insecurity in relation to globalization. Why do people need to feel secure and what happens when a sense of security is lost due to rapidly changing circumstances? Here I proceed from a social constructivist[1] perspective of identity formation, but in contrast to much constructivist research I emphasize the need to take into consideration the socio-psychological aspects of category formation and the essentialization of the other. This involves a focus on how subjectivity becomes securitized through the use of Chosen Traumas, the abjection of the other, and via the manipulation of historical and archaeological 'evidence'.

The final chapter of part II, chapter three, is focused on how religion and nationalism are likely to provide securitized subjectivity in response to the effects

of globalization. Here I discuss how religion and nationalism, especially in combination, act as particularly powerful answers to existential quests for security as they have successfully been able to monopolize both the relationship between self and identity and the subject/other nexus. The concluding section of chapter three also stresses the importance of grasping the connection between the chapters in part one (between globalization, (in)security and religious nationalism), if we are to gain more than a superficial understanding of current discussions on migration policies, multiculturalism, value clashes, identity conflict and the war on terror.

Part three is meant to clarify the theoretical discussion. In this part I make a study of religious nationalism in India with a particular focus on, and comparison of, Sikh and Hindu nationalism. The choice of these two cases can be found in a number of related factors. Firstly, no comprehensive comparative study has been made of these two events – the rise of Sikh and Hindu nationalism. Secondly, processes of globalization have significantly affected both the Sikh and the Hindu cases, especially as these processes are related to the search for security. This makes a comparative study relevant for understanding the relationship between globalization (in)security and identity conflict that goes beyond an Indian context. Thirdly, the rise in Sikh and Hindu nationalism cannot be understood apart from the Indian policy of secularism. As this policy shares a number of important characteristics with multicultural policies in the West, these cases can serve to inform a broader discussion of individual and group rights in the light of globalization. Finally, there are significant differences in the extent to which religious nationalism seems to have become the predominant identity-signifier in the two cases. In this sense Sikh nationalism appears to have largely failed while Hindu nationalism has largely succeeded, which makes for an interesting comparison.

All these factors are, in other words, relevant for comparing Sikh and Hindu nationalism and for increasing our understanding of the relationship between globalization, (in)security, identity conflict and religious nationalism. Thus, in chapter four I show how similar processes of categorizing and demonizing the other have been prevalent in both the Sikh and the Hindu cases. However, as demonstrated in chapters five and six, while the Sikhs have been rather unsuccessful in fusing nationalist and religious concerns in their attempts to securitize subjectivity, the Hindus have been much more successful in this regard. Despite the emphasis on *Khalistan* as a possible future Sikh nation, there were (and are) few Punjabi Sikhs who actually believe(d) in an independent nation outside of the Indian federation. In the analysis I draw on the discussion of the relationship between self, identity, (in)security, religion and nationalism to show how and why the Sikh and Hindu cases differ and the extent to which such differences can be accounted for by relating them to the impact of globalization.

In chapter seven I weave the case studies together in an attempt to understand the significance of the theoretical argument. Here I turn the globalization argument around by viewing globalization as a potential positive process for the development of a common conceptual language. This involves a theoretical discussion of how culturalist policies, as manifest in religious nationalism, can be dealt with to increase power for members of marginalized groups. This also

brings us back to the latest developments in Indian politics, especially the future of identity relations after the 2004 elections. The astonishing victory of the Congress Party is here evaluated and analyzed in relation to Hindu nationalist discourse and the effects of globalization.

Part II

Globalization, (in)security and religious nationalism

1 Globalization and destabilization: approaching (in)security

Globalization has become a defining feature of our times. It is a word used in everyday discourse with variable shades of meaning and a vast number of different connotations. For instance, the future of the European Union and the role of the Economic and Monetary Union are often phrased in globalization terms; the resistance against the policies of the World Trade Organization is related to the globalization debate; and so is 'outsourcing' as multinational companies decide to move their headquarters to one of the world's many global cities. Globalization is not only discussed and conceptualized in economic terms, however. A number of current features such as migration, refugee flows, and the so-called 'brain-drain' from the developing to the developed world are frequently described as consequences of globalization. The spread of Western (often American) culture in the forms of soap-operas, music, fashions and similar trends is also part of a globalizing reality and we seem to be witnessing an increasing anxiety that the benefits of globalization will disappear if one is not thoroughly embedded in global transnational activities.

Globalization is similarly being discussed and debated in academia where studies have been concentrated on aspects of national identities and cultures, ideas of modernity, religion and world history, the localization of the global and the transformation of state-centric assumptions in the social sciences in general.[1] In some versions, globalization is viewed as the path leading to greater development of all people (i.e. towards a global market as conceived by contemporary neo-liberals). In other versions globalization is portrayed as a threatening force; as the new hegemony of capital markets, the evil that is to destroy national cultures, reduce democratic political life, and make the state redundant. Both versions have in common the tendency to see globalization as an unstoppable process, affecting all areas of economic, political and social life.

In this chapter I intend to show how such linear thinking is unhelpful if we are to grasp the multifaceted nature of globalization. Instead, it is important to see the relationship between the global and the local as containing a struggle between forces of domination and resistance. This includes a discussion of how globalization contains certain destabilizing aspects that are likely to affect individuals' search for security. Here I spell out how globalization has been a destabilizing force; heightening feelings of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety for

many people. The result has often manifested itself in the search for a secure home or place. To be able to understand this process I suggest that we analyze security as a 'thick signifier' – a concept developed below. Before addressing this concept, however, a clarifying theoretical discussion concerning the relationship between globalization, modernity and postmodernity, is needed. This also involves an attempt to explain why globalization must be understood in terms of a global-local nexus of dominance and resistance.

Globalization, modernity and postmodernity

Following theoretical attempts to conceptualize the interactions of the global and the local, debates have emerged over the proper focal points of politics today. Some theorists argue in favour of macro-structural solutions to global and national problems, while others insist that focus must be on the local and the personal rather than on the global and national. In theoretical terms, the argument is that between the modernists' location of power in the economy, the state, or interstate relations in opposition to postmodernist theories of power as located in the local, specific and micro realms. The modernists continue to operate within the current existing world order, privileging the state structure and economic development and arguing that globalization is the solution and that underdevelopment, backwardness and provincialism are the problems. Here, the main arguments in favour of globalization have to do with the pace of economic and communicative transformations. The pace of economic transformation, it is argued, has created a new world politics as states are no longer able to control their economies. Electronic communications have affected perceptions and future commitments as events in one location can simultaneously be observed elsewhere. It is further argued that time and space are being undermined by the speed of modern communication and media and that a new global cosmopolitan culture is emerging, a global village,[2] as the world is becoming more homogeneous.

To many critics, sometimes labelled postmodernists,[3] globalization is the problem and localization the solution. The world economy is not global as there is little shift of finance and capital from the developed to the underdeveloped world. Trade, investments and financial flows are concentrated in Europe, North America and Japan and globalization is very uneven in its effects, with only a small minority of the world's population being directly affected. Globalization, from this perspective, is only another phase of Western colonialization and capitalism as the forces that are being globalized are those found in the Western world. Non-Western values have no place within this process. Also, critics argue, there are considerable losers within the globalization process and globalization may only allow for more efficient exploitation of less well-off nations in the name of liberal openness.

The problem with much modernist and some postmodernist (or globalists versus localists[4]) accounts of globalization, is the inclination to ignore the relationship between global and local forces. This omission is largely due to a predominant tendency in the literature to place political issues within the binary

logic of theoretical constructs, such as the global versus the local, homogeneity versus heterogeneity, universalism versus particularism or society versus the individual. By treating these as mutually exclusive forces, the result is often a failure to grasp the multifaceted effects of globalization on individuals. Instead of problematizing the relationship between the individual and the group, literature on globalization repeatedly takes individual or political groups for granted as an unproblematic nucleus of political transformation. However, in order to understand the impact of globalization one must attempt to grasp the fleeting moments of everyday life experiences through which local subjects get to know their surroundings. Rather than seeing them as each other's opposites we must attempt to understand the matrix of global and local forces, of forces of domination and resistance, of rapid change and transformation brought about by the global restructuring of capital and multidimensional effects of new technology. This is what I refer to as the global-local nexus. By paying closer attention to this nexus, it is possible to grasp the effects of globalization on individuals and groups.

The interplay between the global and the local: forces of domination and resistance

Understanding this matrix of global and local forces means taking seriously what Featherstone (1995: 9) has called 'doubles'. This term is used to account for all those instances when individuals or other social categories are not either/or but instead are both/and. They appear, in other words, in the nexus between the global and the local. As individuals have become more migratory, an increasing amount of people are living between cultures, or on the boundaries between open value systems, and states that have previously been anxious to protect a unified picture of national identity have had to face the challenge of living in a world of double, triple and multiple identities in general. This process of 'the rest' coming back to haunt the image of Europe and the West as closely-knit communities, questions the entire existence of any such thing as homogeneous, integrated and unitary nation-states.[5]

Modernity and its notions of unity and universality in thought and the world has become more difficult as 'the rest' has started to talk back. Modernity has always needed the presence of the 'other' in order to realize itself and that which is not modern has been viewed as the 'other' of modernity. Those aspects not considered modern have had to join modernity by becoming one with it globally. 'Universalizability is for modernity what proselytizing is for many religions' (Alam 1999: 7). The main problem with the terminology of modernity is its ahistorical and essentializing treatment of culture as either 'traditional' or 'modern'. Although culture and identity should be at the core of this debate, these aspects are commonly neglected. Anthony Giddens' treatment of modernity is, for instance, illustrative of this tendency. Modernity, to Giddens (1990: 63, 177), is 'inherently globalizing'. Globalization is grasped in terms of the world capitalist economy, the nation-state system, the world military order and the global information network. In Giddens' view, modernity consists of a 'post-traditional' order

marked by change, innovation and dynamism. It contains globalizing institutions that allow for separation of time and space, and the disembedding of social relations, defined as 'the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across definitive spans of time-space' (Giddens 1990: 21). Modernity is like a juggernaut, 'an uncontrollable engine of enormous power that sweeps away all that stands before it' (Barker 1999: 35). It goes in one direction and in one direction only: from the West to the rest. To his defence, Giddens argues that globalization is more than a diffusion of Western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed.

> The decline in the grip of the West … is not a result of the diminishing impact of the institutions that first arose but, on the contrary, a result of their global spread.
>
> (Giddens 1990: 175, 52)

The problem, as noted by Barker (1999), is that Giddens leaves entirely unexamined what exactly 'non-Western' might mean in a modernized world. His neglect of culture and his tendency to conflate modernity with globalization become problematic at this point. In this sense his argument resembles political culture theory as it has traditionally been understood. Almond and Verba (1963), for instance, argued that democracy demands a democratic culture, but measured culture at the national level as certain attitudes prevail among the population, where individuals are looked upon as going through some kind of cultural programming process, from which they come out equipped with ready-made attitudes. These attitudes are then used to interpret and read the world and political events. Much democratization work and work on civil society proceed from a similar (simplified) view of individuals and culture (see e.g. Di Palma 1990, Huntington 1991, Inglehart 1989, Putnam 1993), where culture remains fixed and unchanging because the process of identity construction is based on passive subjects. In political culture research, cultural continuity is described as a normal state of affairs, while in much democratization work change is initiated from outside – when they become more like 'us'.

This tendency to proceed from an unproblematized notion of culture remains a core problem in much contemporary research as manifest not only in political culture and democratization theory, but also in some recent writings in the field of International Relations (IR). A prominent international relations scholar, Alexander Wendt (1994, 1999), in his IR-variant social constructivism, fails for instance to explicitly engage culture by avoiding a systematic analysis of the concept of society. Wendt simply has no discussion of how actors are constituted into self and other in the first place and there is no discussion of how subjectivities are formed and the politics of identity created. Instead, Wendt sees the world as one constituted of stable identities where certain social features are taken as given. Despite neglecting to provide a deeper analysis of the construction of identity, he insists in treating states as people. But these people are not complex constructions. States, in Wendt's (1999: 195) terminology, are socially constructed, but

they are only socially constructed as unitary actors, casting doubt on the actual meaning of social construction. This, as noted by Steve Smith (2000: 161–2), in a review of Wendt's book, *Social Theory of International Politics*, leaves little room for culture and for domestic debate over the nature of state identity. By proceeding from an uncomplicated view of culture and identity, Wendt continues the modernist trend of using scientific realism for developing his non-positivistic social science of international relations.

Problematizing culture: moving beyond dichotomies

There are two main problems with a view of modernity that fails to problematize culture and identity and instead continues to see modernity as a universalizing hegemony originating from the West and then spreading around the globe. One is the tendency to take for granted that flows of cultural discourse continue to be constituted as one-way traffic from the 'West to the rest'. Even when the predominant flow of cultural discourse is from West to East and from North to South, this should not necessarily be understood as a form of domination. Second, it is unclear that globalization is simply a process of homogenization since the forces of fragmentation and hybridity are equally strong (see Barker 1999: 38, Ong 1999). As argued by Appadurai (1993: 328), when insisting that existing centre-periphery models are inadequate for understanding the new, complex and disjunctive order:

> for people of Irian Jaya, Indonesianisation may be more worrisome than Americanisation, as Japanisation may be for Koreans, Indianisation for Sri Lankans, Vietnamisation for Cambodians, Russianisation for the people of Soviet Armenia and the Baltic Republics.

In other words, it is not only American culture affecting the rest of the world, as is often portrayed in media and, at times, also in academia (see e.g. Barber's (1996) discussion of Jihad vs. McWorld). Asian cultural practices have, for instance, become increasingly influential in many parts of the Western world. In addition, the fact that American products such as Coke, McDonald's and Hollywood soap-operas are sold or shown in remote villages of Asia and Africa, does not automatically result in the creation of a global cultural unit. Actually it is not uncommon that the inflow of such products are interpreted and given different meanings, depending on local context (Ong 1999: 24). '(G)lobalization does not mean that the world is becoming more politically united, economically interdependent or culturally homogeneous. Both its scope and intensity is highly differentiated in its consequences' (Petrella in Boyer and Drache 1996: 66).

As a number of postcolonial writers have suggested (e.g. Bhabha 1990, Chatterjee 1993, Spivak 1993), what we see are various competing centres bringing about shifts in the global balance of power between state and non-state actors that together forge new sets of interdependencies. The result is not the creation of equality between these participants, but mainly that a number of

new actors are demanding to be heard, locally as well as globally. This is likely to result in the appearance of novel conflicts that differ from those of previous eras, as characterized by the dominance of states and state-power. As argued by Ang:

> globalization and cultural flows should not necessarily be understood in terms of a set of neat linear determinations, but instead viewed as a series of overlapping, overdetermined, complex and 'chaotic' conditions which, at best, can be seen to cluster around key 'nodal points'. The result is likely to be an accumulation of points of conflict, antagonism and contradictions, rather than an ordered 'global village'.
>
> (Ang 1996: 165, quoted in Barker 1999: 41)

Dominance and resistance are, in other words, two sides of the same coin. Globalization has assisted in bringing back notions of bounded cultures, ethnic resilience and the re-emergence of powerful nationalistic sentiments. By diffusing models of political organization based on units of discrete nations and nationalist politics, globalization has facilitated the use of nationalism even in cases when people do not react against globalization as such. Understood in this sense, forces of globalization have been quite directly involved in processes of Western colonialization and global capitalist economic domination. The use of nationalism in Africa and Asia against colonial rule may thus be understood as resistance against aspects of capitalist or Western globalization. But in other cases, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, Kashmir, Sri Lanka or Tibet, the force against which nationalism reacts may be better described as regional or local – even if it still has a global dimension.

Problematizing globalization: moving beyond causality

The use of nationalism, regardless of whether it is directly or indirectly related to globalization, both reinforces and challenges the state structure. On the one hand, the state as an institution continues to exercise power by remaining a legitimate force among powerful political elites, as manifest in the state structures of intergovernmental organizations, like the UN and the ASEAN or the supranational organization of the EU. (State)nationalism thus becomes the main legitimate force in a system which reaffirms the state as a unit of power. On the other hand, the challenge to this notion of the state as a unitary, bounded, rational actor, is continually taking place as various groups resist and react against unequal power structures within the state or across state boundaries. This latter notion challenges the state itself – the state as an actor. It is not clear, Roxanne Lynn Doty (2000: 139) argues, that the state should be viewed as an actor, rather it should be seen as subjects acting in the name of the state who are pulled by numerous opposing forces and in many contradictory directions. Here, she describes a conceptual entity, 'the state,' that is in fact not unitary, but 'split, contradictory and even schizophrenic'.

Both these tendencies are aspects of globalization, but they cannot always be regarded as reactions against globalization per se. There are magnitudes of different forces against which nationalist or other movements struggle, and these may be local or regional rather than global in scope, as noted above. Also, as argued by Holton (1998: 158–159; see also Manners 2000), the grievances at the heart of national feelings pertain as much to symbolic value-laden issues, including cultural domination and humiliation, as to material exploitation through global economic mechanisms. Thus, it is important not to exaggerate the direct effects of globalization at the local level, but to leave room for the more diffuse ways in which globalization manifests itself. This is important to keep in mind when proceeding to the empirical study of India, as it is often difficult to distinguish direct causal links between Sikh or Hindu identity construction and global forces. Several scholars of ethnicity and nationalism, for instance, have pointed out that aspects of globalization in the forms of modernization and industrialization in multicultural and segmented societies tend to proceed unevenly and often, if not always, benefit some groups or regions more than others.[6]

As noted by Brass (1991), inequality between different groups or regions does not by itself instigate the development of ethnic or national consciousness. A modernizing country or region can simultaneously contain people in rural areas who continue to believe or speak in a certain way without being concerned that the language they are speaking is being neglected or that their particular religious beliefs are being threatened. Interaction and contact are, in other words, crucial for affecting people's perceptions, which implies that there is no necessary connection between modernization and the fact that people may develop a sense of solidarity. What this suggests is that a group's particular language and the distinctiveness of their religious beliefs do not by themselves predetermine that one group will show more internal solidarity than another group. Such solidarity often requires the presence of political leaders who try to unify and mobilize the group in resistance to the state or in opposition to other societal forces.[7]

Establishing direct causal links or dichotomies between the global and the national or ethnic is thus too crude and simplistic. A major objection to seeing the current world as a matter of cleavages between the global and the national, and between global capital and national political culture, has to do with the complexity of identity. Contemporary identities take many forms and are context dependent, serving as both differentiation and identification markers. Such identities may be local, regional, national, global or a mixture of these. Together they consist of those patterns of 'nodal points' or nexuses between the global and the local described earlier. Globalization, in this sense, is not a new phenomenon, but it has involved some real changes in terms of *scale*, *speed* and *cognition* (Kinnvall 2002b). In terms of *scale*, the number of economic, political and social linkages between societies is greater than at any previous time in history. In terms of *speed*, globalization involves a compression of time and space never previously experienced and in terms of *cognition* there is an increased perception of the globe as a smaller place – that events elsewhere have consequences for our everyday political, social and economic lives affecting individuals' sense of being. This

is also how I understand globalization and how it is conceptualized throughout this book, i.e. not as something new but as a deepening of the extent to which relations across borders are now possible; the increased speed with which such relations are now taking place; and the consequences of such intensifications of relations on political, economic and social levels. As we approach the case-studies, this is important to bear in mind as the effects of globalization in India is discussed mainly in existential and ontological terms as consequences of rapid change. It is this de-territorialization of time and space that impacts on daily life, as in a world of diminishing territorial barriers, 'the search for constant time- and space-bound identities has become a way to cope with the effects of modern life' (Harvey, 1990: 4).

In order to focus the case-studies, such de-territorialization of time and space, or time and space compression, is approached by looking at a number of global processes affecting India. Some of these are: the liberalization and privatization of the Indian economy, where the Green Revolution in Punjab plays a major role; the effects of increased global competitiveness; the changing role of international organization and foreign influence; the spread of democratic values, democratic electoral processes, anti-democratic movements and the breakdown of traditional hierarchical structures in response to democratization; the role of the media and intensified communication, and the increasing use of the identity-card in local politics. Here it should be noted that, although the Sikh and the Hindu cases are at the centre of the analysis, globalization has obviously affected other groups as well, such as the Muslims. The reasons for limiting the analysis to Sikhs and Hindus are further discussed in chapter four. However, local responses to these global dimensions of change are not linear and may differ from state to state, from locality to locality and from group to group. The global-local nexus is changing depending on context, at the same time as some responses may be similar across countries, cultures and contexts. As argued by Jonathan Friedman (1990: 311): 'ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization are not two arguments, two opposing views of what is happening in the world today, but two constitutive trends of global reality'. The perceived tension, as Arjun Appadurai (1990) has shown, is that between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization (see also Holloway 1994, Robertson 1992, Sklair 1991).

By pointing to nodal points or nexuses, it is possible to conceive of the actual meeting of the two – the global and the local – as a process, rather than seeing them as dichotomies or causal events. The concrete meeting is not between a self and a passive acultural other, as some modernists would like us to believe, but rather between two social constructions that become reconstituted through the actual interaction. Of interest then is what actually happens as these meetings occur, when the global meets the local or at that point in time when global/local nodal points emerge and initiate change. It is within these processes we must look for, and identify, those forces which change the character of an individual's relationship with her immediate surroundings – how globalization becomes a stabilizing or destabilizing force. As my main interest at this point is to explore the

extent to which social conflict is related to globalization, the focus is primarily on the negative, or destabilizing, aspects of this process. However, as the global and the local are conceptualized as both domination and resistance, there are also a number of positive aspects arising from this relationship – some of which are touched upon below and further developed in chapter seven.

Globalization as a destabilizing force

How then does globalization become a destabilizing force? Attempting to identify those processes that are likely to negatively affect individuals does not necessarily imply that these are the same as global processes. As an actual implemented process, economic and political liberalization (which I take as an example of a global-local process), may be very local in character, encountering different responses, depending on context. The Green Revolution in Punjab is a good example of this as Punjab was chosen as the main region for agricultural change, but where the Green Revolution simultaneously reflected a global development strategy of the late 1960s aimed at providing a technical solution to local problems. Hence it is difficult not to read aspects of liberalization more generally as the diffusion of a number of policies that assume a global character, producing similar results regardless of context. In this latter sense, forces of liberalization may actually produce social and economic dislocation as well as personal uncertainty and insecurity. Citizens may respond to this crisis by turning to leaders who they hope will solve their problems of material deprivation, psychological uncertainty, and ideological absence. What this means is that globalization in terms of increased movement of goods, services, technology, borders, ideas and people has real social and economic consequences. Some of the less desirable consequences are manifest in increasing rootlessness and loss of stability as people experience the effects of capitalist development, media overflow, structural adjustment policies, privatization, urbanization, unemployment, forced migration and other similar transformative forces.

Processes of globalization are, in other words, often accompanied by a *'neoliberal' ideology* all over the world (see Bauman 2001, Calhoun 1994, Scholte 2000). The policy changes described as liberalization commenced at the end of the 1970s in most developed countries, with a move from Keynesian economics towards more monetarist macro-economic policies. This was followed by a shift away from state-provided welfare from 'the cradle to the grave' in favour of private initiatives and 'pay as you go' services (see Stewart and Berry 1999: 150–151). There were parallel changes in the developing and/or newly democratized societies. In many of these societies *Structural Adjustment Programs* (SAPs) were initiated by the World Bank and the IMF in the 1980s and the 1990s, together with more local programmes aimed at the creation of free market economies. These programmes, directed at privatization and increased global competitiveness, were meant to create wealth and to strengthen civil society but have often had the reverse effect by removing job security for many, thus aggravating social tension (Calhoun 1994, Hoogvelt 2001, Hurrell and Woods 1999,

Kolodner 1995, Scholte 2000). According to ILO estimates, by the end of 2002 worldwide unemployment was at 180 million people, while the number of working poor (underemployed) was at 550 million of the world's total work force.[8] Job losses in the rich societies have regularly followed the introduction of labour-saving technologies, together with the outsourcing tendency among many firms to use global advantages as a rationale for moving manufacturing plants to low-wage societies.[9]

Hence, rather than creating stability, initiatives aimed at *privatization* and *increased global competitiveness* have often threatened to remove job security from the middle and lower-middle classes in many societies. Increased competitiveness has also, in many cases, undermined the government's image as the protector of citizens' welfare because of its decreasing involvement in the economic sector. This has tended to produce an authority vacuum in which new groups emerge in response to individuals' desire for security and welfare. In India, for instance, some would argue that economic development has produced new labour divisions as traditional Hindu equilibrium, based on caste hierarchies, has been disrupted. Uneven economic gains have also aggravated social tensions and created problems that have come to resemble class conflict.[10] The results of the Green Revolution in Punjab were, for instance, distributed unequally and a wide gap emerged between a small number of rich and middle class farmers and a larger number of small and marginalized farmers.

The *spread of democratic values* has simultaneously, and quite ironically, also affected social dislocation. Old patterns of behaviour have become regularly undermined as traditional power relations in civil society become democratized. As argued by Kolodner (1995), norms of equality and egalitarianism have delegitimized previous hierarchical structures in many societies. There are two basic consequences of this: (1) old ways of getting things done are eliminated, which tends to leave behind only uncertainty, and (2) the structures that identified the community and bound it together are also being eliminated, which has a disintegrative effect. Both consequences are dislocating and, as such, they are likely to augment emotional insecurities and fear perceptions at both personal and social levels.

By emphasizing the *breakdown of societal structures*, it should be pointed out that in many societies, as in India for instance, such hierarchical structures have been (and are) based on privilege, which implies that their disappearance is not always a negative thing. Instead, such changes can create a common space from which resistance can be launched. This also complicates the tendency to view processes of colonialization and decolonialization in the developing world as a one-sided globalization process. As argued by Javeed Alam (1999: 71), who writes about decolonialization in India:

> Colonialism was certainly an overwhelming presence, yet to consider all that came out of this encounter as stemming from colonial hegemony and stamped with its ideology, is hard to defend. What could have been the conceptual response to the swelling popular yearning for some form of equal respect and

> dignity for the person? To be counted in society as agents? Or that the high social value placed on gender difference be devalued? A language drawn on the philosophy of egalitarianism or of rights and liberty would in any case seem to many in such situations as appropriate, though this might on the surface look like an intrusion into the existing conceptual world of rendering reality. Likewise, what could have been the alternative possible languages for translating the growing feeling in society that poverty, hunger, disease and deprivation are not natural conditions of social existence or of carmic chains?

While recognizing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of traditional structures, and it is important that we do, it must be emphasized how privilege is always manifest in the custom of culture and attainment. Hence, when under threat this custom is defended, never the privilege. Here one should not forget that democratization itself is in many ways an elite process. As argued by Scholte (in Baylis and Smith *et al.* 1997: 28): '(I)n the present-day globalizing world, the construction and implementation of rules occurs mainly through elite competition rather than through representative, let alone participatory, democracy'. Culture, in its various definitions and shapes, is likely to become a political weapon in this process. It becomes the means to recover within its arena what is lost through law, politics and economic struggle (Alam 1999: 68). In the case of India, for example, both the Sikh-dominated party of the Akali Dal and the Hindu nationalist party, the BJP (the Bharatiya Janata Party), have used culture as a response to the breakdown of traditional structures by emphasizing religious values, a history of subordinance and colonialization, linguistic particulars and mythologies of a *true* Sikh and Hindu past.

The *democratic electoral process* also helps to mobilize groups that have previously been rather passive and weak, and leaders tend to polarize issues to attract political followers. Simultaneously, constitutional guarantees of freedom of association and expression also provide *political space for extremist organizations* which may be openly anti-democratic, divisive and violent (Kolodner 1995). It is not uncommon that such groups mobilize against immigrants or other (often) marginalized groups in society. Here the historical formation of 'race' comes into play. In many Western societies, for example, the historical construction of 'race' has been one of power and subordination, where people of other colours have occupied structurally subordinate positions in relation to the dominant, usually white, population. The concept of 'colour' is here relative to both immigration and colonialization patterns. For instance, African Americans in the United States, Aboriginal Australians in Australia and Afro-Caribbeans in Britain have all occupied positions of lower paid, less skilled jobs, in a similar sense to how Turks have been structurally marginalized in Germany, Algerians in France and people from the former Yugoslavia in Sweden or Denmark. In each case groups within the respective society have been racialized in different ways. Asians in Britain, for instance, have historically been stereotyped differently than have Afro-Carribeans, by being perceived as 'second-class' citizens in comparison to the view of Afro-Carribeans as 'third class' citizens.

This ordering may, however, be a thing of the past as 'the war on terror' is increasingly being directed against Muslim minorities in Western societies. In other words, 'different groups are "differentially racialised" and the target of different racisms' (Barker 1999: 61; see also Oommen 1994, 2002). In India Muslims have clearly been differently racialized by Hindu nationalist groups than have other religious minorities, such as Christians, Sikhs or Jains. As minority groups they may all, however, serve as scapegoats in the minds of the disadvantaged classes of dominant groups. This becomes particularly evident in times of rapid change and economic recession. Both the massacres on Sikhs in Delhi after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 and the many recent attacks against Christians in Karnataka and elsewhere constitute clear examples of such tendencies.

Frequently there is also a tendency to *mobilize against foreign influence* by opposing foreign consumer goods industry and their access to sectors where domestic enterprise has developed expertise. Here the entry of multinational firms is often seen as an invitation to imperialist powers to colonize (or recolonize) the country (see Panini 1995). A tension, in other words, has been created between democracy and the pursuit of economic development (Calhoun 1994: 306). On the one hand, as the political legitimacy of the state declines in favour of dominant regional classes and communities, the state may respond by strengthening its internal security apparatus and may indulge in indiscriminate political repression. This obviously threatens the social foundation of democracy. On the other hand, democracy itself has served to give voice to divisive forces.

This latter aspect tends to be neglected in literature on the transition to democracy or democracy and civil society literature in general. The relationship between modernization and group conflict or nationalism tends to be analyzed and dealt with in separation from the larger issue of democracy.[11] Hence, nationalism and group conflict has been treated as something to be avoided, instead of as a central dimension of democracy, regardless of the fact that nationalism and group conflict are fundamentally involved in questions about the social foundations for democracy. Often forgotten is the fact that states remain the most crucial vehicles for achieving self-determination, which means that nationalism, or the search for a lost identity, becomes the solution to the privatizing effects of the market (Calhoun 1994).

This is clearly connected to discussions of state and citizenship. As argued by Axtmann (1996: 4): 'Membership in a territorially demarcated, "sovereign" political unit is still the relevant precondition for citizenship rights; membership in the "human race" does not yet translate into universal human rights which would incorporate political, economic, social or ecological citizenship rights'. The whole notion of self-determination is basic to democracy, and yet both neglected by democratic theory and wrapped in primordial 'wall-paper'. As Calhoun insists (1994: 311), 'the problem of self-determination is that for every socially relevant self, we can see internal divisions and vital links to others. There is no single, definitive, and fixed "peoplehood" which can be assumed in advance of political discussion'. The strengthening and polarization of religious identities in India are,

for instance, difficult to grasp unless we take seriously the British attempts to compare rates of literacy, population growth, professional occupations and recruitment to the army according to religious affiliation.

The potential for identity-based movements thus exists in any stratified society where one group is dominant over another, but it is not usually realized until some members from one group attempt to move into the economic and political space occupied by another group. If they fail to occupy this space, or suffer through the process, they are likely to protest against the system of stratification as a whole and, as a result, try to mobilize the group (see Brass 1991, Horowitz 1986). But it is not only the under-privileged groups that are subject to mobilization. The privileged group is also likely to defend its interests and may use nationalist, religious, ethnic or other cultural sentiments to do so. The anti-Muslim campaign initiated by the Hindu nationalist group, the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), in the early 1980s in response to the conversion of over 1000 Dalits (former untouchables) to Islam, is a good example of how the privileged group is using national interests (the undermining of the Hindu nation) as grounds for mobilization.

The *media and improved communication* in general have increased the magnitude of such mobilization, as political leaders now have the possibility to propagate their messages to vast audiences. The revolution in communication has, above all, brought about a revolution in political awareness, in images of the world, which in turn has transformed the character of political action. The change, as argued by Evan Luard (1990: 12–13) is at root a change in *relative visibility*. He points to two explanatory factors. One is the fact that events in other societies have become almost as visible as events in our own society, and thus a subject of equal concern. What is politically significant, Luard argues, is not so much that most extreme inequalities (or other issues) now occur at the global level, but the fact that they are *seen*. A global vision hence creates global sympathy or global aversion. Second, this change in relative visibility also affects the vision of the disadvantaged themselves. It is not only the richer societies of the world that know more about the miseries of the disadvantaged in others, but those in other parts of the world are better aware of the more democratic political systems, the more productive economies, existing in richer countries (Luard 1990: 13–14; see also Hoogvelt 2001, Ong 1999). As most societies of the world display various patterns of structural inequalities it is not, however, only between societies of unequal status that improvement in communication plays a role but also within societies. Thus, the entire ‘inside-outside’ boundaries of state relations are becoming increasingly difficult to uphold, empirically as well as theoretically (see Walker 1993).

Hence, it is likely that improved communication may further increase dislocation and facilitate tensions between various societal groups, as growth in information sharing also reduces the isolation of one community from another. As argued by Kolodner (1995), if television shows the gruesome details of religious riots in Calcutta to citizens in Bombay, there is a significant chance that religious communities in Bombay will want revenge. The media also produce ‘demonstra-

tion effects'. Increased education, expanded business and professional travel, tourism, foreign students, urbanization, immigrant workers and refugees have all enhanced the possibilities for such effects to occur.

> People today are participants in more extensive and numerous social networks than was the case for earlier generations. Many of them have become 'boundary spanners', individuals who move freely around the world, interpreting its configurations and uncertainties for those who do not travel widely. /…/ (S)uch stimuli have an enormous, if not always desirable, potential for shaping how people perceive, comprehend, judge, enter, avoid, or otherwise interact with the world beyond their workplace and home.
>
> (Rosenau 1992: 264–5)

In the case of India, for instance, the publicizing of religious (or other) strife outside India, particularly information about the Middle East's Islamic movement, has provoked fear among Hindus that Islamist influences will infiltrate India and radicalize and mobilize the over 112 million Muslims. Similarly, the Punjabi vernacular press played a critical role in heightening religious identification in the years leading up to the attack on the Golden Temple by reinforcing the linguistic basis of religious identity.[12] In this way, modern media not only record and distribute information about reality, but also construct that reality.

In a democratic setting, both the centre (or the state authority) and regional and group leaders also have the possibility to play the *identity card* to attract voters, which means that they may use social tensions to further their political aims (see Oommen 1994). When played by the central government, it is frequently an attempt to create regional divisions in favour of the government in power. When played by the opposition(s) against the central government, there is often a tendency to make promises to clean up politics and stabilize the country. Leaders of such movements hence use the moral, political and ideological void that rapid changes tend to produce in order to exploit the weakness of the ruling elite and to benefit from the fears and insecurities of either the majority or the minority (Kolodner 1995). Within this process both state representatives and many minority groups seek to objectify 'unique' cultures for themselves or their group.

In this sense, the capitalist world-economy has paved the way for the postmodern emphasis on 'difference' and culture. What this section has showed is how aspects of globalization tend to have a destabilizing effect on many individuals. The spread of *neoliberal ideology*; the *deepening of democratic norms*; the *breakdown of hierarchical structures*; the opening up of space for *anti-democratic movements*; the *mobilization against foreign influences*; the impact of the *media* and the *revolution in communication*; as well as the increasing possibilities to play the *identity card* by both states and minority groups, are only a few aspects of globalization which have opened up for the use of culture as a source of revivalism, fundamentalism and national chauvinism. This is not to say that all individuals are affected negatively by these forces. The multifaceted nature of globalization makes such a statement much too simplistic, but it is to underscore

how these forces may destabilize the lives of some individuals – particularly those for whom life has changed rapidly and for whom previously secure structures seem to be breaking down. The following section explores how the breakdown of such structures is likely to result in the search for a renewed sense of security.

Globalization, identity and the search for security

Globalization, modernity and the spread of capitalism have for many people resulted in the development of a new form of social alienation (using Marxist terminology). Modernity, Peter Berger argues, has to do with the spread of an 'engineering mentality' as it deprives human beings of a natural relationship with the world. The abstract character of public institutions, with their implicit anonymity, causes alienation and the pluralistic structures of modern society have made the lives of more and more individuals migratory, ever-changing and mobile as they get uprooted from their original social milieu. This can result in what Berger calls 'homelessness'. Such homelessness, Berger argues, has found its most devastating expression in the area of religion.

> The de-modernizing impulse, whether it looks backwards into the past or forwards into the future, seeks a reversal of the modern trends that have left the individual 'alienated' and beset with the threats of meaninglessness.[13]

Here, Giddens argues that, in the past, the particularities of time and space merged with religion and mythology to create a 'privileging of place'. An identity based upon one's place within such a locality provided personal security and 'rootedness' in the world, or at least security against the anxiety of identity crisis (Giddens 1991:26). Giddens may provide a simplified account of modernity and globalization, as mentioned earlier, but his discussion of the subjective dimension of social experience and its relation to social institutions is certainly well-founded. In this he emphasizes how the spread of capitalism and modernity (as aspects of globalization) has affected individuals and groups psychologically.

> Modernity, it might be said, breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition, replacing these with many larger, impersonal organizations. The individual feels bereft and alone in a world in which she or he lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional setting
>
> (Giddens 1991: 33)

It is at these nexuses, or nodal points, of processes of liberalization, democratization, communication and the breakdown of hierarchical structures, that the global meets the local. It is here that the social is linked to the psychological as emotional processes emerge within, between and among individuals as they are confronted by macrostructural challenges. It is, in other words, at this level that

power forms the subject and acts upon her in a constructive sense of the term. As argued by Judith Butler (1997: 18): 'power works not merely to dominate or oppress existing subjects, but also to form subjects … the formative dimension of power is to be understood in a nonmechanistic and nonbehavioristic fashion'. Going back to an imagined past by using re-constructed symbols and cultural reference points is thus a response to the destabilizing effects of changing patterns of global mobility and modernizing forces. It is a way to react against and sometimes reject the hegemonic discourse of modernity by attempting to recreate a lost sense of security.

(In)security as a 'thick signifier'

Approaching the concept of (in)security is not a simple task, however. Rather than defining it or addressing it from an analytical-conceptual perspective, I agree with Jef Huysmans (1998) that we have a lot to gain by analyzing security as a *thick signifier*. A thick signifier approach throws light on the contextual aspects of security, as it implies a search for key dimensions of the wider order of meaning within which the framework itself is established. As argued by Huysmans:

> (i)n a thick signifier analysis, one tries to understand how security language implies a specific metaphysics of life. The interpretation does not just explain how a security story requires the definition of threats, a referent object, etc. but also how it defines our relations to nature, to other human beings and to the self.
>
> (Huysmans 1998: 231)

Security as a thick signifier thus places an individual or a group inside the wider discursive and institutional continuities within which they are embedded. Approaching security as a thick signifier means unmasking those structural relations through which security discourses are framed. These structural relations reflect the division and inequality of power between those involved and affected by the discourse. This means that those who produce the discourse also have the power to make it 'true', i.e. to enforce a particular reading of a threat according to which people and groups are defined (see Foucault 1980: 201). This power to make a discourse 'true' is particularly evident in cases where one group holds more privileges and resources and when it uses the language of 'difference' as a way to legitimize its own dominance and marginalize others (van Dijk 1997: 144). As the chapter on Hindu nationalism will show, Hindu notions of superiority are in many ways built upon perceptions of Muslim inferiority. Everything in the Hindu nationalist discourse thus aims to discredit *the* history of the Muslims while elevating *the* history of the Hindus. Security as a thick signifier highlights the dynamics behind peoples' and groups' different senses of security by clarifying how societies institutionally and discursively position people into structures of marginalization. It provides the means by which to discuss real economic and social asymmetries, both between and within societies.

Studying security as a thick signifier means, in other words, the deconstruction of at least three interrelated processes. One is to deconstruct the larger stories or narratives in which security dimensions are embedded, such as narratives of colonialization and globalization, to study the extent to which such narratives affect people's sense of security. The second process involves understanding how these processes manifest themselves locally as discursive, institutional and cultural practices that define people's perceptions and thus their different senses of security. Finally, studying security as a thick signifier means probing its psychological dimension, i.e. to analyze the extent to which individuals become preoccupied with the search for one secure identity, the *securitization of subjectivity*, in response to how these individuals are discursively, institutionally and culturally positioned.

For example, people and groups are often discursively and institutionally positioned into structures of marginalization through the language of 'multiculturalism', where each group in society is said to be protected through politics of separation rather than integration. Policies of 'multiculturalism' often go together with the liberal emphasis on tolerance and the right to self-assertion and recognition of *the* group's (often perceived as inherited) identity. As such they correspond with the liberal belief in politically unconstrained globalization and reinforces assumptions of universality and individualism by giving the group homogenous universal features based on self-rights for the group (Bauman 2001). One of the main problems with the liberal approach as well as with many Marxist analyses is the assumption that there exists such things as shared cultures (or shared ideologies) (van der Veer 1996), where each culture has clear boundaries. As Bauman (1996) and Handler (1994) have pointed out, culture as well as identity must be treated as verbs rather than nouns. Culture must be seen as an 'ongoing reconstruction of boundaries that are symbolic and not naturally given' (Handler 1994: 29, cf. Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins 2002: 289).

Culture viewed as a noun, as an immutable natural essence, disregards unequal power distribution both between and within groups, globally as well as locally. The previous propensity to explain inequalities in racist terms has thus been replaced by one (neo-racist) which explains asymmetric power relations as the inalienable right of every community to choose its own form of life (Volkan 1997). In this sense it combines, as Zygmunt Bauman (2001: 135) has noted, the right to be different with the right to indifference, thus justifying status quo and current structures of power. This means both a continued belief in modernity as progress and a re-fortification of cultural boundaries as people are feeling increasingly dislocated.

> Insecurity (among the immigrant as much as among the native population) tends to transform multiculturality into 'multicommunitarianism'. 'Culture' becomes a synonym for a besieged fortress, and in fortresses under siege the inhabitants are required to manifest their unswerving loyalty daily and to abstain from any hob-nobbing with outsiders.
>
> (Bauman 2001: 141)

The migratory-based segregation of people, schools and workplaces in many urban cities is a reflection of such transformations. Aicha Echikr for instance, a social worker in a suburb of Paris, describes how in the 1980s the suburbs were created to contain everything; day-cares, schools, shops, hospitals:

> In my opinion it was a big failure. You constructed closed boundaries around the young people. A person was born there, went to day-care there, to pre-school and high-school. In the worst cases he or she even went to prison in the same suburb.[14]

The development of these kinds of 'minority neighbourhoods' have in many places created a vicious circle of racialization where the fear of 'coloured ghettoes' in Britain, of 'Arab quarters' in France, or 'Turkish districts' in Germany, have become a motive in the campaigns against immigration. Similar to how culture(s) become interpreted as natural categories, these neighbourhoods have come to be seen as 'natural processes' of racial differentiation rather than the result of economic and social disadvantages (Castles and Davidson 2000).

The fortification of such minority neighbourhoods has often been accompanied by increased nationalism among the majority population, where protecting 'the nation' and 'its culture' becomes a resource for survival and resistance. In India, for instance, the revival of Hindu nationalism has implied a conscious decision to reject Muslim (and other) traditions in favour of the invented traditions of India's pre-colonial past. This has left many minority communities to fend for themselves, thus strengthening their own collective identities. Multiculturalist policies have, in other words, helped minority groups to cultivate their language and cultures, while they have often been ineffectual in helping these groups in their struggles against discriminatory policies. The way secularism has been implemented in India resembles multicultural policies in the West, as secularism has worked to affirm religious rights for the group rather than acting as a separation between the state and religion. This has often forced the state to intervene in religious matters, thus reinforcing religious boundaries instead of obliterating them. The problem with a number of these policies, as Nancy Fraser has noted (in Bauman 2001), is the attempt to decouple the cultural politics of difference from the social politics of redistribution when, in reality, we need both recognition and redistribution if structurally marginalized migrants and other minorities are to avoid institutional and structural exclusion.

It is, for instance, difficult to grasp the emergence of Sikh and Hindu nationalism among groups in the diaspora unless realizing the extent to which many of these individuals and groups have experienced exclusion, subordination and racism in their host societies. The inability to gain access to the political and social establishment, even when being rather affluent in economic terms, is particularly noticeable among many of these groups. These movements' existence and their power of attraction have been framed as a response to a combined socio-economic and religious reality for many (particularly young male) people who experience the effects of politics at home or as exiles. They have also

emerged as a reaction to political power struggles at home or in their host societies and sometimes even in reaction to power dynamics between these societies' governments.

Analyzing security as a thick signifier makes us realize how structural conditions of insecurity are intimately linked to the emotional significance of identity mobilization. In this regard, those who engage in resistance politics tend to feel a genuine sense of loss when faced with their current socio-economic as well as political conditions. This sense of loss is often expressed in the recreation of a real or imagined past, of culture, tradition or through the distant and often romanticized memory of a home. In the process of identity mobilization, these are all likely to become political weapons. As Ashis Nandy has noted in relation to expatriate South Asians:

> in recent years many expatriate South Asians in the West have become more aggressively traditional, and more culturally exclusive and chauvinistic. As their cherished world becomes more difficult to sustain, as they and their children begin to show symptoms of integration into their adopted land, they become more protective about what they think are their faiths and cultures.
> (Nandy 1997: 158)

This protection of faiths and cultures is not limited to migrants to other countries, but can be equally noticeable among internal migrants. Hence Adela Ros (2001) describes how migrants from Andalucia to Barcelona in Spain become pre-occupied with their redefined home-culture(s) and language as they are settling into their new circumstances. Similarly, in my own interviews with internal migrants in India, especially seasonal workers to Punjab, I found many of them to be experiencing strong feelings of dislocation and homelessness. Belonging to the lower classes (and castes) of a changing Indian society, feelings of exploitation, powerlessness and insecurity are characteristic of many of these internal migrants. As emotional reactions they can be related to the destabilizing effects of the global-local nexus. A thick signifier approach thus takes into consideration the consequences of modernity and structural inequalities, at the same time as it does not lose focus of the emotions involved in this process. As people feel increasingly uncertain about their daily life, the search for security takes on ontological and existential dimensions.

Ontological security and existential anxiety

At an individual level, ontological security is provided by the belief that the story (the discourse) being told is a good one, one that rests on solid ground. 'Ontological security' and 'existential anxiety' are essential ingredients in Anthony Giddens' (1991) theory of human existence. Ontological security refers to a 'person's fundamental sense of safety in the world and includes a basic trust of other people. Obtaining such trust becomes necessary in order for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety'

(Giddens 1991: 38–39). Giddens draws on object-relations theory,[15] as developed by Winnicot, and argues that such trust is developed early on in childhood and continues to play an important role in adult life as it is reinforced in the routines of social life. Basic trust is connected to the interpersonal organization of time and space. Giddens argues that an awareness of the separate identity of the parenting figures originates in the emotional acceptance of absence: 'the "faith" that the caretaker (the mother in Winnicot's texts) will return, even though he or she is no longer in the presence of the infant' (Giddens, 1991: 38). Stated in simple terms, ontological security is a security of being, a sense of confidence and trust that the world is what it appears to be. Trust of other people is like an emotional inoculation against existential anxieties – 'a protection against future threats and dangers which allows the individual to sustain hope and courage in the face of whatever debilitating circumstances she or he might later confront' (Giddens 1991: 39).

To be ontologically secure and avoid existential anxiety means to Giddens that we can provide 'answers' to fundamental existential questions. The prime existential question involves the question of *existence itself*; the discovery of an ontological framework of 'external reality'. This involves the 'struggle of being against non-being' for the individual. In 'doing' everyday life, all human beings 'answer' the question of being. Here tradition has a key role in articulating action and ontological frameworks as it offers an organizing medium of social life (Giddens 1991: 48). A second type of existential question concerns the relations between the *external world* and *human life*. As such, it has to do with life, death and anxieties about finitude or life after death. Religious cosmologies may play on such anxieties by providing an afterlife, or cycles of rebirth. A third category of existential questions concerns the existence of *other persons*. According to Giddens (relying on Winnicot), subjectivity derives from intersubjectivity and learning the qualities of others is connected in an immediate way with the earliest explorations of the object world and with the first stirring of what later become established feelings of self-identity. It is here that Giddens most explicitly states that trust in others is at the origin of the experience of a stable external world and a coherent sense of self-identity. 'Trust, interpersonal relations and a conviction of the "reality" of things go hand in hand in the social settings of adult life' (Giddens 1991: 51–52). A fourth and final type of existential question concerns self-identity itself, or rather what self-identity actually is? Self-identity, in Giddens version, is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. 'It is *the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*' (Giddens 1991: 53, italics in original).

In this Giddens relies on Erik Erikson (1950), whose approach to identity signifies the closeness between identity and security. Identity, in Erikson's work, is seen as an anxiety-controlling mechanism, reinforcing a sense of trust, predictability and control in reaction to disruptive change by re-establishing a previous identity or formulating a new one (Kinnvall 2004). For Giddens then, like Erikson, self-identity consists of the development of a consistent feeling of biographical continuity where the individual is able to sustain a narrative about the

self and answer questions about doing, acting and being. In this sense he says that identity is what we think it is, but he also insists that identity is not a pre-given collection of properties that we possess or have. Rather, identity is a project and the resources we are able to bring to an identity project are dependent upon both situational power and specific cultural contexts. This implies that social categorization matters; it matters whether we are male, female, black, white, rich or poor as we bring different power resources 'to the project'. Despite this acknowledgment of power relations as important aspects of self-identity, Giddens' self remains a core-self which is able to reflexively coordinate itself into unity. In this sense it differs from the fractured postmodern subject which assumes different identities at different times, identities that are not unified around a coherent self. This theme is discussed further below and in chapter two.

Of importance at this point is to realize the difficulties in maintaining biographical continuity and a consistent narrative about the self in times of rapid change and uncertainty. As the literature on globalization, diaspora, refugees and migration has shown (see for example Bauman 2001, Castles and Davidson 2000, Modood 2005, Ong 1999), these processes are both structural and psychological. Migration, for instance, is often characterized by a sense of powerlessness and dependence as insecurity is increasing among many migrants. This is frequently mixed with an acute anxiety about their new circumstances and strong feelings of homelessness.

Home, homesteading and place-making processes

The very category of 'home' as a bearer of security can be found in its ability to link together a material environment with a deeply emotional set of meanings to do with permanence and continuity (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998: 30). It is a place where one knows and accepts certain values, rules and behaviour, but it is also a place from which one can open the door and go out into the world – providing there is a home to return to that protects you from discrimination and violence (Castles and Davidson 2000). Ontological security is maintained when home is able to provide a site of constancy in the social and material environment. Home, in this sense, constitutes a spatial context in which daily routines of human existence are performed. It is a domain where people feel most in control of their lives because they feel free from the social pressure that is part of the contemporary world. Home, in other words, is a secure base on which identities are constructed (Dupuis and Thorns 1998: 28). Homelessness is exactly the opposite as it is characterized by impermanence and discontinuity.

When home as a category of security is lost due to rapid socio-economic changes, then new avenues or a new home – a new identity – for ontological security are searched for. This is similar to Sylvester's (1994) and Kronsell's (2002) discussions of homesteading as a strategy for coping with homelessness. Homesteading as a strategy means making and shaping a political space for oneself in order to go beyond and surpass the life of contradictions and anxieties of homelessness. This may simply involve becoming a member of an exile commu-

nity, such as the Sikhs in Canada, the Pakistanis in Britain or the Kurds in Sweden, by finding common places of assembly, like gurdwaras, mosques or Kurdish community halls. Or it may imply joining a local identity-based group which seems to provide answers and stability, such as the Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, the Rashtriya Swayamseval Sangh in India, or the Maoist guerrilla in Nepal. The fact that many of these people find themselves both structurally marginalized and ontologically insecure often gives rise to a politics of resistance and the growth of local identities.

For many migrants (domestic as well as international), homesteading becomes a way to return intimacy and security to their everyday life. Homesteading can be a reaction to the continuous exposure to an increasingly commercialized society where the individual is experiencing feelings of existential isolation (Giddens 1991). However, for many migrants it has probably more to do with feeling 'different' in encounters with others, especially as they are trying to compete with a majority population that knows the rules and procedures of behavior (Ong 1999: 12–13). Among many international migrants, homesteading is associated with homeland politics, so called modern diasporas. These refer to 'a minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin' (Esman, 1986: 333).[16] Homesteading may entail the explicit support of nationalist or other activities in the homeland, sometimes in opposition to a federal or occupying state. For many migrants (or minority groups), however, homesteading is more directly focused on creating a secure space in the host (or majority) society, involving for example the use of the homeland language in the household, the celebration of homeland festivities and the adherence to certain traditional practices (see Castles and Davidson 2000). The fact that some of these are contested practices when conducted in the host (or majority) society, such as the right to home language in the schools, the right to wear traditional dress, or the ritual slaughter of animals, may evoke different kinds of responses – both among the minority and the majority population.

One response has to do with the sharpening of the boundaries around some (but not others) of these cultural practices and traditions, involving clear definitions of what they entail. Part of the homesteading process is thus likely to involve the construction of a 'hegemonic tradition', which refers to those sources of social authority that seek to represent themselves as the true interpreters of a particular tradition. Multiculturalism as a policy has often sustained grievances regarding the protection of minorities' rights, which has left the community leaders to define their community's tradition (Gayer 2002). It should be noted how such definitions almost invariably become ahistorical essentialized narratives of *a true*, and *real* tradition. As the case of India tells us, this is often the case in segmented societies in general, not only in those that have encountered international migration.

A second response to homesteading involves what Castles and Davidson (2000) have referred to as *place-making*, which can be seen as a spatial extension of homebuilding. It means creating an area, a neighbourhood that visibly transforms the previous landscape into one that reflects the tastes and values of a certain community. The use of signs on shops, restaurants, minority markets, etc.,

delineates the community's boundaries. 'China towns', 'Little Indias', or 'Asian markets' in many Western societies are good examples of such processes. The Tibetan community in Dharamsala, northern India, is another. Not only has a place been created, but an entire institutional structure has come into existence as a result of living in exile. Brixton in London constitutes a third, but slightly different, example of a place that has accommodated diverse groups – thus reflecting place-making as a process involving a number of minority communities who together demarcate a separate area from the majority population.

A third response is related to the homesteading process among the majority population in reaction to real or perceived increases in migration. As the notion of home is built upon the idea, or the discourse, of the nation-state, it brings with it an emotional attachment to those on the inside and an exclusion of those on the outside. Hence, the reinterpretation of tradition, of culture, is as likely among the majority population as it is among the minorities and may be strengthened through the migrants' (or the minorities') place-making process as projected through media and populist policies. European countries have, for example, seen an upsurge in populist anti-immigrant parties who, through racist campaigns, encourage the myth that the 'immigrants are taking over our national soil and heritage'.

Homesteading always involves a process of 'othering', i.e. of defining boundaries between self and other, as national, religious or other stereotypes are constructed among majority and minority populations. This will be further discussed in chapter two. Here the emphasis is on how processes of homesteading have intensified the search for secure selves in relation to significant others. Only by identifying the others, can we identify ourselves. 'Othering' constitutes, in other words, a significant part of both homesteading and place-making processes. Within these processes, feelings of insecurity, and often fear, become publicly expressed and frequently involve an intensified search among majority or minority groups for *the* roots of *their* community.

Globalization viewed as time and space compression does not, in other words, so much homogenize the human condition as it tends to polarize it. As Bauman has noted, such polarization 'augurs freedom of meaning-creation for some, but portends ascription to meaninglessness for others. Some can now move out of the locality – any locality – at will. Others watch helplessly the sole locality they inhabit moving away from under their feet' (Bauman 1998: 18). This is what Bauman (1998) refers to as 'symmetrical differentiation', namely that while elites increasingly choose isolation (physical or mental 'gated communities'), the rest of the population finds itself excluded and forced to pay the cultural, psychological and political price for their new isolation. It is in relation to these processes of differentiation that the search for security is likely to result in attempts to create *one* stable identity.

Identity as a process of becoming

In relation to this, Giddens' notion of ontological security and existential anxiety are fruitful for understanding the global-local nexus as psychologized discourses

of domination and resistance. As emphasized by Roberta Sigel (1989: 459): '(t)here exists in humans a powerful drive to maintain the sense of one's identity, a sense of continuity that allays fear of changing too fast or being changed against one's will by outside forces'. Globalization has made it more difficult, but not less desirable, to think in terms of singular, integrated and harmonious identities as individuals constantly tune their actions to an increasing number of others and issues. The fact that individuals search for one stable identity does not mean, however, that such identities exist. Rather we need to understand identity, not as a fixed, natural state of being, but as a *process of becoming*. As argued by Stuart Hall (1992: 227): '(i)f we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative about the self" about ourselves'.

This view has much in common with the social constructionist (or constructivist) position as represented by scholars like Gergen (2000), Harré (1979, 1983), and Shotter (1985). Social constructionists argue against the notion of a core-self. Hence, instead of focusing on individual psychological processes, emphasis is given to the situated, linguistic and narrative construction of identity. Proceeding from Bahktin's theory of dialogism (Gergen 2000), so-called dialogical self-narratives are linguistically constituted and reconstituted through people's relationships (Gergen and Gergen 1991). Rather than being a core-self, these self-narratives become 'as-if-selves', through which we present ourselves 'as if' we were bearers of lasting identities. In reality, however, this process only refers to the individual's current perception of herself as constructed in the actual dialogue (Gergen 2000). This is what Shotter (1985) refers to as social accountability.

Social constructionism, like poststructuralist perspectives more generally, have been criticized for not being able to determine meaning here and now, as identity is constantly negotiated and in flux (Kinnvall 2003). Similar to postmodernism it has also been accused of describing how reality really looks like at the same time as it denies any essentialist assumptions of the nature of reality. Thus reality is 'really' heterogeneous, constantly changeable and open to interpretation (Flax 1990). To this can be added that social constructionism has difficulties in accounting for the emotional underpinnings of identity construction as manifest in the actual need to construct a comforting story about the self, about ourselves.

At the same time it should be noted that it is because of the social constructionist ability to locate identity construction in the actual *process of becoming* that it is able to explain collective identity as something more than the sum of the individuals that make up the collective. This will be further discussed in the next chapter. Through its focus on the structural underpinnings of identity, a social constructionist approach thus provides the foundation for analyzing security as a thick signifier. However, the focus on security as a thick signifier adds an important emotional dimension to the constructionist approach. Emphasizing (in)security as an inherent component of power relations actualizes how many people become structurally and emotionally preoccupied with the search for one stable

and comforting identity. This preoccupation is likely to be heightened in uncertain circumstances brought about by forces beyond our control, such as globalization.

To sum up, analyzing security as a thick signifier means analyzing what goes into this story or narrative about the self, about ourselves. It means investigating the structural reasons for why individuals experience ontological insecurity and existential anxiety as well as the emotional responses to these feelings. A thick signifier approach highlights the intersubjective ordering of relations, i.e. how individuals define themselves in relation to others based on their structural basis of power. This implies that individuals experience different levels of security in relation to their own and others' perceptions of the structural power position they are currently in. As their ontological insecurity increases they attempt to *securitize subjectivity*, which means an intensified search for *one* stable identity (regardless of its actual existence).

This invariably entails a process of establishing and confirming certain identity-traits in yourself and the juxtaposition of these to others. Securitizing subjectivity always involves a stranger-other as the self is not a static object, but is part of a larger process of identity construction. This larger process is ultimately intersubjective, implying that internalized self-notions can never be separated from self/other representations and are always responsive to new interpersonal relationships (Ogilvie and Ashmore 1991: 230). The questions one must ask then are, first, what happens to notions of self, other and identity in this securitization process, and, second, why is it that certain collective responses (such as nationalism and religion) are more likely than others? The first question is the focus of the following chapter, chapter two, while the second question is dealt with in chapter three.

2 Securitized subjectivity: others and the emotional aspects of identity (re)construction

To argue that constructions of identity have their historical counterparts is not the same as saying that these constructions are essential or primordial in their current form. The primordial perspective is problematic in this respect, as in most others. The primordial approach emphasizes the emotional ties of individuals to ethnic groups. It is basically an essentialist view of identity in which ethnic groups (and hence nations) are taken as given. Some versions focus on a presumed primordial need for shared identity that is fulfilled by culturally defined groupings. Geertz (1973) for example, argued that primordial ties were based on kinship, residence and particularistic loyalties, which in response to modern changes resulted in politicized ethnicity or nationalism. Others have taken more of a socio-biological perspective and have maintained that ethnicity is an extension of a 'natural tendency to favour kin' (e.g. Greenfeld 1996, Isaacs 1975).

In both cases identity is basically defined as a given category that arises naturally as individuals are born into a particular community. Apart from being static and non-transformative, the primordialist perspective can also easily serve as a common ground from which to launch racist and sexist politics. Descriptions of Sikhs as warriors, of Hindus as tolerant, or of Muslims as fanatic, are all essentialist narratives that mainly serve as common unifiers for racist, exclusive constructions of the other. The fact is that 'objective' or neutral meanings have no place in the construction process of the other. Essentializing the other becomes part of the subjective process of constructing not only a singular, integral identity of the 'other', but also a singular and altogether harmonious identity of the 'self' (Calhoun 1994: 26). The actual comparison between 'others' and 'us' serves to reinforce the whole notion of primordial identity (so called 'everyday primordialism'), regardless of its actual existence. This need for sameness reflects a tendency to think in terms of categorical identities rather than in terms of more complex notions of persons, relationships or networks of concrete social relations. As argued by Calhoun (1994), categorical identities can be invoked and given public definition by individuals or groups, even when they are not embodied in concrete networks of direct personal relationships.

In this chapter I discuss how primordialist or essentialist notions continue to dominate much current discourse on identity. The aim of the chapter is to show how primordialism becomes an intrinsic identity category, as individuals attempt

to *securitize subjectivity* in order to reduce ontological insecurity and existential anxiety in light of globalization and rapid change. Securitizing subjectivity refers to the search for *one* stable identity. This means addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of category formation and identity (re)construction. Hence, the chapter starts by a discussion of everyday primordialism as reflecting current power structures in or between societies, especially as manifest in discourses on ethnicity and nationhood. It then goes on to show how escaping such everyday primordialism necessitates a differentiation between the process and the product of category formation and identity construction. This involves a discussion of whether it is possible to aggregate from the individual level to that of the group, nation or state. Furthermore, it means to complicate primordialist readings of identity by analyzing how structures and discourses position people into self and others and how such positioning is likely to reinforce the psychological and emotional need for securitizing subjectivity. This means revisiting psychoanalysis in order to analyze identity conflict. If the previous chapter attempted to show how globalization works as a destabilizing force that is likely to increase the search for security, this chapter tries to understand how this securitization of subjectivity process actually works. It is an attempt to show how securitizing subjectivity is an intrinsic part of analyzing security as thick signifier.

Approaching 'everyday primordialism'

The inclination to perceive some groups as different, fanatic or primitive while others are regarded as similar, friendly or modern, reflects a propensity to invoke categories despite the absence of real relationships or even contact. Viewing people in such negative or positive terms has to do with the belief that some categories are more essential than others. Throughout history it has been common to view certain categories as given, as essential, with the implicit assumption that they could not be changed and because they were unchangeable they had to be conceptualized as social facts. Nations and groups based on essentialist characteristics of ethnicity, religion, race, caste, gender or any other categorical generalization, have all been historically perceived as such facts. However, this is by no means a thing of the past only. Rather, it is a pattern that is still alive in everyday public discourse.

Hence, there is a tendency to view the drive for statehood by small nations in Western Europe as evidence of their national consciousness and as a legitimate aspiration for self-determination, while similar events elsewhere are cast in stigmatized terms. The inclination here is to portray certain cultural attributes as essential or primordial. Descriptions of what in popular media is referred to as 'ethnic warfare' and 'ethnic cleansing' are good examples of this kind of essentialization of cultural traits. Such descriptions contain a multitude of primordialist and racist explanations of ethnicity and nationhood, as well as of identity in general, along with speculations about 'primitive' human nature (Oommen 1997). For instance, it is common to talk about 'balkanization' when describing processes in the Balkans or in the former Soviet Union. In Africa similar practices

are commonly referred to as tribalization, while in South Asia they are viewed as communalism. As noted by Oommen (1997), Parekh (1995) and Pieterse (1997), among others, if concepts such as cantonization, decentralization and national self-determination all have positive connotations; balkanization, tribalization and communalism are all negative and repressive.

> (I)n the process 'ethnicity' functions as a new imagery and code of racism: civilized people have nationalism while 'others' indulge in ethnicity. Representations of 'ethnicity' – as of 'fundamentalism' in another context – are replete with references to irrational crowd behaviour and mass pathology.
> (Pieterse 1997: 367)

Apart from racist biases in discourses on ethnicity, there is also a tendency to combine primordialist notions of ethnicity with a modernist perspective. Essential categories are the 'traditional' ones, those left behind in the language of 'modernity'. Ethnicity, from this perspective, becomes a thing of the past, something to escape from as we enter the modern era.

As a concept, ethnicity is often related to kinship. But while kinship is largely based on descent and common ancestry, ethnicity is a much vaguer, and more problematic, notion. The difficulties with the term stem from the way 'ethnicity' is used to refer to a variety of phenomena. An ethnic group can also be a religious group, a language group, a 'racial' group, a communal group or any other form of collectivity. It is often unclear how ethnic categories differ from other cultural constructions. As noted above, the term 'ethnic' also tends to have a derogatory connotation, referring to a stage of evolutionary development of identity characterized as being somewhat 'primitive' and 'uncivilized'. As Johan Galtung (speech in Lund, Sweden 1991), once remarked; 'What do Americans mean when they say they are going out for some "ethnic" food? They surely don't mean going to McDonalds for some burgers and fries?' Here Galtung draws attention to the tendency to universalize Western culture and individuals, at the same time as he underlines the derogatory connotations with which the concept of 'ethnicity' is often imbued in everyday discourse.

At the same time, 'ethnicity' remains a concept difficult to avoid and some kind of definition is clearly necessary, if only to prevent the common abuse of the term. Defining ethnicity in its broadest sense, I use it to refer to a sense of identity consisting of the subjective, symbolic or distinctive self-perception of any aspect of culture that defines a group of people. Such self-perceptions may be used by the group (or leaders of a group), to create internal cohesion and differentiate itself from other groups.[1] As a concept it bears similarities to the nation, but it often lacks the discursive framework of national identity construction in terms of formal institutions, legal recognition and symbolic national referents (such as flags, sports teams, national anthems, national dress, etc.). Should such a framework emerge or be in existence, however, there is no reason why the two concepts may not overlap. Calls for an independent East Pakistan, for instance (resulting in the formation of Bangladesh in 1971), relied on the idea of Muslim

Bengalis rather than Bengali *Muslims*, where ethnicity in terms of language and culture came to override religion as a defining feature of the new nation. At the time of partition in 1947, *Muslim* had been the relevant defining factor in opposition to the Hindu other; while in the 1960s the Hindus became increasingly replaced by the Muslim other of West Pakistan (see Madan 1998). As related phenomena, both ethnicity and nation may have been prevalent long before the idea of the nation was framed in the now prevailing terminology. This will be further discussed in chapter three. For now it is enough to emphasize how both ethnicity and nationhood are often couched in essentialist discourse as people become convinced that cultural characteristics constitute an essence of their identity; so called 'everyday primordialism'.

The processes of self and group formation: distinguishing process from product

As cultural bases, such characteristics remain powerful legitimators of identity as they are constructed, promoted and perceived as essential to human beings and to the organization of human society. This does not mean, however, that such culturally specific traits are in any way essential to human nature *per se*. The distinction is that between *process* and *product* (Penrose 1995: 391–417).

The *process* of identity and category formation may very well be common to all human beings, while the ways such processes become expressed – the *products* – are not. The first process involves the acceptance and creation of self, as the individual is both consciously and subconsciously defining herself in relation to others. This entails the subject/other nexus and portrays self-formation as being rooted in a unique but shifting balance of similarities and differences between self and other. This brings us to the second process that may be essential to all human beings: that of category formation in general, and the process of group formation in particular. Again, the essentialness is in the *process* of group formation, not in the *product* of this process (Penrose 1995). As a product, however, groups come to be seen as essential in their own rights. In times of rapid change and/or in the hands of motivated leaders, a competition among many possible salient identities is likely to arise. This process is often manifest in the attempt to achieve trump card salience for one categorical identity rather than another which, in turn, encourages in-group essentialism.

When in-group essentialism is successful, it seems to transform both our self-understanding and our identity. Shotter (1985: 170), as discussed earlier, refers to this process as 'social accountability', which in the 'telling' of the self constructs both identity and the social relationships in which we are involved. In a poststructuralist vein he argues that identity has no essential core but is instead a collection of multiple self-concepts that are derived and recreated in interaction with others. Hence, as noted in chapter one, he is less concerned with individual psychological processes than with situational, linguistic and narrative constructions of identity. The opposite of this core-less self is of course the strong, unitary, often rational, Cartesian self. Self and identity becomes the same thing in this strong self-version

and the belief in unity reflects the idea of the individual as a self-contained, self-sufficient and self-moving entity who has one and only one core identity.

Neither approach, I would argue, is able to capture the subject/other nexus as the other continues to be viewed as a mirrored image of the self rather than as a social self that comes into existence through affective and powerful relationships with other people. Both versions reflect the failure to make a distinction between process and product and make essentialization of cultural traits seem like 'natural' outcomes. In the strong self-version, the product is the false, unitary and essentialist self, while in the weak self-version the product is a totally historical or textually constituted 'true' self. Unless we give up either version in favour of a social self that is social and unique at the same time, it will be difficult to analyze the emotional underpinnings of the self/identity and the self/other nexuses.

In relation to this debate on a strong versus a weak self (or universalism vs. particularism), feminist theoretical propositions have much to offer. Hence, many feminist writers recognize postmodernist and poststructuralist contributions when it comes to undermining the universalist ideas about self, knowledge and power still prevalent in the contemporary West. Derrida's deconstruction of woman, for instance, may seem compatible with feminist discourse, as he suggests a move away from biological, essentialist or ahistorical concepts of gender. However, as argued by Jane Flax (1990), it appears to replicate woman's place as the undifferentiated other to man rather than to conceptualize both man and woman as constituted by and existing within historically discrete systems of gender relations (see also Somers and Gibson 1994). In a similar vein Foucault, on the one hand, criticizes the idea of an essential or pre-social identity proposed in the existentialist version of the philosophy of the subject. Yet, on the other hand, his conceptions of self still remains abstracted from any social context which may predetermine inequalities between the behaviours of individuals. As argued by Lois McNay (1992: 175):[2]

> Foucault's idea of the self is caught within a subject/object dynamic in which the other is simply a narcissistic extension of the self – its difference subsumed under an identity logic – to the extent that his original idea of the social mediation of the self remains undeveloped and unexplained.

Rather than posing essentialism and constructivism as each other's opposites, some feminist writers have argued that it may be worth risking essentialism under certain circumstances. The point here is not a simple return to biological assumptions of any such thing as a 'true identity', but rather that, under certain circumstances, claims of shared identity may be useful. The argument suggests that in those instances when a particular category of identity has been marginalized, repressed or devalued in dominant discourses, it may actually prove useful to invoke it in an essentialist way.[3] Similar to a thick signifier approach, feminist deconstructions of the self thus point towards locating self and its experiences in concrete social relations, not only in fictive or purely textual conventions (see e.g. Chodorow 1989). Such a reading provides a basis for a social self that comes into existence in and

through affective and powerful relationships with other people. This social self constitutes an inner self that is not simply fictive nor essential or natural, but rather embodied, gendered, social and unique at the same time.[4] Identity should thus be viewed as the greater sphere of this social self as the individual identifies or is identified with the larger collective. Defining the social self in these terms actually implies a merging of the first and the second process of identity construction (the acceptance and creation of self and the process of category formation), as the construction of self cannot be separated from social relations.

As a theoretical proposition it may pose a way out of the tendency to treat 'individual' and 'society' as separate entities, as it simultaneously addresses the relationship between self and identity and the nexus between self and the other. This intersubjective self may also provide the missing link in much globalization literature through its emphasis on emotional aspects of human relatedness as embedded in power relations between constructed (and often essentialized) categories. Thus, at one level, it brings attention to the emotional and affective feelings of ontological and existential security, as individuals define themselves in relation to others. At another level, it points to the fact that identity is always gendered identity, which means that political and other ideologies always operate through notions of gender difference. Essentialized categories of, for example, 'The English,' 'Hindus,' 'Muslims,' 'Bosnians' or 'Serbs' are all complexly interwoven with meanings and discourses of gender. In a more general sense it makes us observant of the asymmetries of power between men and women as well as between powerful and marginal groups, locally as well as globally. This notion of a 'social self' also proves useful for a broader understanding of collective identities, such as the ethnic group, the nation or the state, as it provides us with a way to aggregate from the individual level to that of the collective without committing acts of reductionism.

The formation of group identity and the problem of aggregation

Here, Iver Neumann certainly has a point when he argues that poststructuralists are right in their insistence that 'self' cannot be a transcendental phenomenon, and so 'selves' cannot exist. But, he is also correct in maintaining that keeping the subject alive enables us

> to study the making of the 'self' out of a plethora of context-specific 'identities.' At the level of practice, it allows us to tell stories of self. Furthermore, 'the other' may be specific human collectives, which may commit **acts** like giving recognition. Crucially, inasmuch as they are seen as **acting**, their acts may also change.
>
> (Neumann 1997: 218 bold text in original)

In other words, just as structures cannot be understood in objective terms as a denial of the reality of subjects, so it becomes difficult to understand group action without having a reference point in the subject.

Here I agree with Neumann that we need to separate context-bound identities from those of (the ontologically impossible) context-traversing identities. However, I disagree with the terminology used by Neumann as he refers to the former (the context-bound) as 'identity,' and the latter (the context-traversing) as 'selves' (Neumann 1999: 218). The differentiation is confusing as it leaves out self in the former case, while reducing selves to identities in the latter. Rather than separating them it seems to make more sense to keep the terms 'context-bound' and 'context-traversing' identities as both consisting of a social self (as defined earlier), only that in the former case such a social self is the creation of intersubjective human relations, while in the latter case it is a matter of telling a story 'as if' this social self (manifest in the group, the nation or the state, for instance) actually existed. When telling such stories it is important, however, to take seriously Bourdieu's (1977: 19; see also 1990) warning against substituting 'the reality of the model' for 'the model of reality'. We should beware, Bourdieu says, of investing collectivities with the kind of substance or agency with which embodiment allows us to endow individuals, as the boundedness of the collectivity is different from the bodily integrity of the individual. The beginning and ending of a collectivity cannot be measured using, what Jenkins (1996: 82–3) has referred to as, a 'dressmaker's tape'.

Both individuals and groups are complex constructions who deal with the inner and outer world in idiosyncratic ways (Volkan 1997). An individual is no closed entity despite her bodily constraints, but neither are individuals and groups the same thing. Using a broad notion of the construction of a social self makes it possible to gain insight into group formation and group conflict without reducing the group to the individual. Regardless of terminology, important here is Neumann's insistence on these 'selves' as 'as if' stories, which prevents any essentialist claims as well as ontological reductionism. This implies that, in order to bring clarity to the analysis, states and other group formations can be analyzed 'as if' they were human agents. It is in this sense we use the terminology of context-traversing identities. Groups, nations, states, etc., can thus behave 'as if' they were individuals (reflecting context-bound identity), but can never be reduced to such. Neumann deserves to be quoted at some length on this issue:

> The making of selves is dependent on the raw material of available identities. The forging of selves, then, is a path-dependent process, since it has to cram in a number of previously negotiated identities in order to be credible. Furthermore, even ruling out the emergence of new situations in which identities will have to be negotiated, it is a never-ending process, since there will always exist more identities than can easily be accommodated in a coherent story of self, however minimalist definition of "coherent" is needed.
>
> (Neumann 1997: 219)

In other words, the making of 'selves' is constantly forged in connection with multiple others. Group identity, regardless of how we label it, is consequently constructed and reconstructed in relation to others, and, similar to the construc-

tion of a social self, is not essential or natural, but rather embodied, social, gendered and unique at the same time. This is important to keep in mind when we turn to the empirical analysis, as it is only possible to use the group identity labels 'Sikhs', 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' if we are aware that these are complex and heterogeneous categories at the same time as certain mutual historical and contemporary experiences have created shared reference points between the members of the groups.

The fact that the group exists in relation to others and is connected to the role the other plays in discourse and the practices of a given society, rather than to any individual level of cognition, is important to bear in mind. This calls for a certain caution when relating individual cognition to outcomes or when making inferences from the structure of the dialectic of 'self and other' to particular outcomes (see Kratochvil 1996: 209). When talking about group, nation or state identity it therefore remains important to abstain from the common tendency to treat any of these as unequivocally bounded actors with a set of individual attributes. If by deconstructing the group (nation, state) we end up with a reification of the very category of self – a given self with a certain number of properties, then we must question if an actual deconstruction process has occurred. At the same time it is essential to maintain the notion of a social self as having a subjective (human) base, as this allows for emotive and affective reasoning, understanding, reaction and behaviour. This is what 'social and unique' refer to in the definition of a social self. The individual emotional experience may be unique to a person's perceptions of herself, at the same time as such uniqueness is created through intersubjective relational and structural processes. Allowing for emotions thus opens up the possibility for understanding how fear, hate and inhuman acts of violence can occur between individuals and groups. This, in turn, involves a return to psychology and the human mind in order to grasp how self and others must be approached as complex, multifaceted and relational beings.

Others in discourse and the social construction of racism

As an academic concept, the term 'Other' has only recently become part of the common terminology in sociology, as introduced by interdisciplinary scholars identifying with postmodernism, postcolonialism and cultural studies (Reader 1995, cf. Riggins 1997: 3).[5] This is not to say that accounts of 'others' have not been consistently told throughout history. For centuries, Western thinkers viewed human diversity as one of differences among types of human beings. This affected both their views of themselves and others. Under the influence of nationalist ideas, this resulted in notions of societies as singular, bounded and internally integrated. Within these realms, people were basically the same, while outside of them they were different – they *were* the other and essentialized as such (see Calhoun 1995: 44). This tendency to use the singular form; 'the other', has been criticized by present-day scholars as, even in critical writings, it has a tendency to reproduce the stereotypical homogenization of other cultures and people even when seeking to overthrow such stereotypes (Riggins 1997: 4).[6]

At the same time it remains an uncontested reality that outsiders are commonly perceived as a homogeneous category of others even when being insiders to a social, economic and political system. This is what George Simmel refers to when he talks about 'the stranger' as the sociologically marginal (Simmel 1971, cf. Riggins 1997: 5). The stranger or the foreigner can only be defined in a negative fashion (Kristeva 1991: 95).[7] This tends to be the case even in those instances when the terminology used actually sounds positive; 'being exotic' for instance. There is a common tendency to associate exotic with 'pleasant, different but backwards' in a similar fashion to how 'ethnic' (as noted earlier) may implicitly refer to some kind of 'primitive group formation'. As argued by Stuart Hall when describing how racism was fought in Britain in the seventies behind the slogan of Black politics and the Black experience: '(I)n that moment, the enemy was ethnicity. The enemy had to be what we called "multiculturalism." Because multiculturalism was precisely what I called previously "the exotic." The exotica of difference' (Hall 1997a: 55). As discussed in chapter one, such neo-racism is commonly disguised in political discourse as being simply a matter of cultural differences. As the French extreme right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen frames it:

> Thus, we now observe, on our national soil, a clash between two fundamentally different cultures. Islam, which already represents the second religion in France, is opposed to any assimilation and threatens our own identity, our Western Christian civilization.
>
> (quoted in van Dijk 1997: 58)

While Le Pen has impacted on actual policy changes in France while out of power, the Danish government is a good example of a current administration which has used the 'national soil' argument to directly hinder further migration. Hence since 2002, a number of laws have been passed that make it increasingly difficult for non-EU foreigners to become Danish citizens. It can now take up to eleven years to become a citizen and foreigners have to take a language test; they have to prove they have not committed any crime in another country, and they have to swear an oath that they will learn about Danish culture and norms. The culmination of this process is reflected in the decision by the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* to publish the caricatures of the prophet Mohammed in 2005.

The difference between them and us and the threat posed by them are thus articulated in terms of religion or other cultural characteristics that are found to be incompatible with 'our culture' (van Dijk, 1997). Such neo-racism is not grounded in biology but in anthropology and in an ideological commitment to the virtues of difference. Hence a 1992 United Nations report argued that:

> … racist ideology emphasizes the unique nature of the language, religions, mental and social structures, and value systems of immigrants of African, Arab, or Asian origin, for instance, in order to justify the need to keep human communities separate. It even goes so far as to contend that preserving their

> identity is in the interest of the communities concerned. By asserting a radical cultural pluralism, the new racism based on cultural differences tries, paradoxically, to look like genuine anti-racism and to show respect for all group identities.
>
> (quoted in Volkan 1997: 22)

In Western Europe the targets of this new phenomenon have tended to be guest workers and new immigrants from the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia, the Indian subcontinent and Africa. In India, the targets have traditionally been the Muslim minority, although the last decades have witnessed increasing tendencies to launch attacks on both Sikh and Christian minorities. Believing that racist discourse disguised as culture is limited to right-wing groups or politicians alone is, however, simply wrong. Huntington's influential 'clash of civilizations' thesis, for instance, differs only marginally from the new racism approach. As noted by some of his critics (Lapid 1996: 8, Shapiro, 1994: 495), Huntington superficially challenges the essentialization of states as bounded actors with culturally specific traits, only to recreate them in a world of pre-given cultural agents with inherently conflicting interests (read civilizations) (see Lapid 1996: 8). The tendency in some international relations theory to move towards culture and identity without, as discussed earlier, a corresponding move away from categorical, essentialist and unitary understandings of these concepts, may thus also run the risk of reflecting neo-racist practices.[8]

But it is not only in extreme right-wing circles or in theoretical establishments we find neo-racist discourses. Studying British immigration discourse or the American anti-affirmative action debate, for instance, the tendency is similar. Here the common practice is to use class arguments rather than race and emphasize that most refugees and immigrants are coming to the West for economic rather than political reasons. As argued by the Conservative home secretary, Michael Howard, in response to a fellow member:

> I entirely agree with my hon. friend. It is an inseparable part of the good race relations record, of which we can be proud, that we have a firm but fair immigration control. Our procedures are being abused both by illegal immigrants and by bogus asylum seekers.
>
> (quoted in Hayter 2000: 34)

Instead of using the term, 'economic refugees', the immigrants are thought of as frauds and liars and immigration restriction is not a policy decision but a 'natural' necessity to protect white Britons from the hordes from the South (van Dijk, 1997: 48). Sometimes, as Hayter notes (2000: 2), these people are just called 'illegals' as if human beings could be categorized as an illegal human being. van Dijk has described this tendency as racism denial, as other cultural or class aspects take predominance in the discourse.

Contrary to much political and media debate in Europe, US representatives do not generally deny the existence of racism and discrimination. However, in

the Republicans' opposition to quotas for minorities, the tendency was to assert that racism was a thing of the past, that we now live in a 'colour-blind' society, and to introduce quotas would be to revert to racist practices of the past (see van Dijk 1997: 55–60). Here it is interesting to note the resemblance with Hindu nationalists' arguments against 'reservations' for lower castes as well as their accusations against Congress for 'appeasing' the minorities by giving special rights to religious groups. The argument in the latter case is that this constitutes a kind of 'pseudo-secularism' rather than real secularism, and that it only benefits the minorities while it works against the interests of the majority – the Hindus.

Strangers, or 'others', are also frequently described in terms of 'more or less'. Oommen (1994: 161–2), for instance, argues that there exists at least four different categories of others, where the first refers to 'the equal other' who is different but not subservient to the self. The second category consists of 'the internal other' and refers to marginalized groups in society such as women or certain established immigrants, while the third group contains 'unacceptable' societal groups like, for instance, homosexuals or particular religious groups: the 'deviant other'. According to Oommen, all three of these categories are likely to exist within the system. But there is also a fourth category that Oommen refers to as 'the outsider, the non-equal other', which may include non-established immigrant or religious groups of (supposed) foreign origin. It is this latter category that is often perceived of as being essentially different. Oommen's differentiation is important in regards to how different groups are often racialized (and marginalized) differently. As Oommen correctly points out, the level of 'foreignhood' or 'strangeness' given to the other is contextual and dependent upon the type of situation in which the other is observed. Still, the fact that 'the other' is viewed in isolation from 'the self' rather than as a part of it remains problematic.

Todorov, in his descriptions of the Spanish conquest in Mexico (1982: 85, cf. Riggins 1997 and Neumann 1999), manages, to some extent, to escape this problem as he, rather than using categories, identifies three dimensions of the relationship between self and other. The first dimension is concerned with 'value judgments', as the other is perceived as good or bad, equal or inferior to the self. Second he points to 'social distance' as being the perceived physical and psychological distance the self maintains from the other, while the third dimension is focused on 'knowledge' as involving the extent to which the history and culture of the other is known to the self. In identifying these dimensions, he also questions the common tendency to make a linear connection between low social distances, in-depth knowledge and a positive view of the other, and vice versa. In his comparison of Hernán Cortés' and Bartolemé de Las Casas' relationships to 'the Indians' he shows how Cortés' knowledge of 'the Indians' far superseded that of Las Casas. At the same time, however, Las Casas perceived 'the Indians' in far friendlier terms than did Cortés (Todorov 1982, cf. Neumann 1999). Such an observation necessarily questions the assumption that greater knowledge of the other is enough to prevent conflict or violent acts.

Rather than being a reality, greater knowledge, mutual respect and tolerance often remain moral ideals. Instead the contextual relationship between groups that are perceived as different from each other is frequently characterized by prejudice, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism and racism. This is especially the case when one group holds more power, have more privileges and resources and uses 'difference' (such as colour, language or religion) as a legitimizing tool in order to dominate and marginalize others (see van Dijk 1997: 144, Brass 1991). This is where the politics of living identity through difference must be brought to the forefront, which means the politics of recognizing the existence of multiple social identities, not of one. It is important, Stuart Hall argues, that we recognize '(T)hat we are all complexly constructed through different categories, of different antagonisms, and these may have the effect of locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality and subordination, but which do not yet operate on us in exactly the same way' (Hall 1997a: 57).

A thick signifier approach takes into account such structural positioning, based upon the power resources we bring to the identity project. Although structurally focused, a thick signifier approach also emphasizes how the relationship between self and society is based on the emotional resources that bind people together in idiosyncratic and complex ways. It is, in other words, both a structural and a psychological approach. Power and emotions are always intimately related and cannot be discussed in separation from each other. What makes a thick signifier approach different from previous attempts to bring together structural and psychological approaches to identity has to do with two things. One is its emphasis on 'location' or 'positioning', as the power resources we are able to bring to the identity project are always dependent on our current position in the power hierarchy. Another difference can be found in the significance given to the 'securitization of subjectivity', which refers to the attempts made to intensify the search for one stable identity in order to reduce ontological insecurity and existential anxiety. Much existing literature tends to underestimate these two points and therefore has difficulties in traversing the historical dichotomies constructed through the modernist discourse, such as self and identity, actor and structure or the individual and society.

In the final section of this chapter I intend to show how the securitization of subjectivity as a response to globalization and rapid change can be understood through a psychoanalytic lens. This requires that we first outline how identity has been approached in different kinds of literature, often reflecting the dichotomous nature of self and identity discussed above. Such dichotomies emphasize the need to go further than much existing theory if we are to understand how emotions and structures are inextricably linked. In doing this we revisit psychoanalysis to analyze how the securitization of subjectivity involves turning the other into an abject as the unwanted (essentialized) parts of the self is projected onto the other. This also entails a concern with Chosen Traumas, which refers to mental recollections of a fearful past where historical and archaeological 'evidence' become important ingredients of a successful projection process.

Constructing the 'other', transforming the self: the securitization of subjectivity

Much literature on self and identity is characteristic of the historical dichotomies of modernist discourse. Lemert (1994) and Mennell (1994), for example, distinguish between identity as used in political science and macro-sociology, identifying broad social categories, and identity as used in psychology and micro-sociology, accounting for a more subjective version of some kind of unique 'self'. And Deaux (1996) differentiates between identity as understood in developmental theories in psychology, identity as studied within symbolic interactionism in sociology and identity as understood in social identity theory in social psychology.

From the perspective of securitizing subjectivity in relation to a subject other, it appears, at least at a first glance, as if social identity theory and its derivative, self-categorization theory, would be particularly useful devices for understanding the construction of self and others. Social identity theories have their roots in Tajfel's (1970, 1982) minimal group paradigm, which shows that individuals tend to favour their own group (in-group) in relation to other groups (out-groups) even when the group formation per se is relatively meaningless. This has to do with the fact that groups give their members self-esteem and that individuals are therefore motivated to improve the status of the in-group in relation to the out-group (see Billig and Tajfel 1973, Hogg 1992, Hogg and Abrams 1988, Tajfel and Turner 1979).

While the early work by Tajfel and Turner was focused on the psychological motivation of group membership, the self-categorization theory developed by Turner *et al.* (1987; see also Oakes *et al.* 1994, Turner 1994) has been focused more on the cognitive underpinnings of social identity. In contrast to social identity theory's binary distinction between personal and social identity, self-categorization theory conceptualizes self at different levels of abstraction (personal, intergroup and interspecies), and expresses a more marked fluidity in identity formation as individuals constantly shift back and forth between an individual and a social identity (Oakes *et al.* 1994, Monroe *et al.* 2000). Individuals are said to be more likely to think of themselves as members of social groups under conditions in which that group membership maximizes the similarities between oneself and other group members at the same time as it increases the dissimilarities with other groups[9] (Turner *et al.* 1987; see also Huddy, 2001, Kinnvall 2003, Monroe *et al.* 2000).

Based mainly (but not only) on psychological experiments, social identity theory and self-categorization theory have made some important observations concerning the tendency among individuals to positively regard themselves and their group in relation to other groups. Of importance is also the way these theories are able to account for the psychological processes by which the self is redefined in terms of group norms and the associated stereotypes of particular social categories (Monroe *et al.*, 2000). Their strength can further be found in the attempts made to explain the behaviour of large-scale collectivities rather than just the

small groups of laboratory research (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001). There are, however, a number of reasons why I find this literature problematic for understanding the subjective process of securitizing subjectivity and the role of others within this process.

One has to do with the limited treatment of ideology, culture and discourse which, I believe, makes it difficult to fully understand why some individuals of the group are prepared to make sacrifices for the group while others stay marginally involved in group activities. 'Self-categorization theory', as argued by Reicher and Hopkins (2001: 39), 'tends to treat context as if it were a given and categories as if they are largely read off from this context'. Here I believe a thick signifier approach is more fruitful for understanding identity formation and identity mobilization as it is focused on unmasking those structural relations through which security discourses are framed, thus reflecting inequality and unequal power relations in a certain context. Another reason can be found in these theories' often essentialist treatment of identity as something more ascribed than acquired. As noted by Leonie Huddy (2001), the minimal intergroup situation does not allow for identity choice and thus remains a deeply deterministic view of identity development. To this could be added the difference between belonging to a group and internalizing its meaning. This refers to the distinction between belonging to a common category by sharing certain characteristics obvious to the outsider, and group membership that is meaningful for the actual definition of oneself and one's identity (Jenkins, 1996: 23, cf. Huddy, 2001). With its strong focus on categorization as a constant cognitive aim without any deeper analysis of the structural positioning of the person or group engaged in categorization, self-categorization theory may find it difficult to explain subjective interpretations of what different group memberships mean for the individual. This, in turn, is likely to impact on its explanatory power for understanding how previously harmless others may suddenly become reconstructed into the stranger-enemy.[10]

Hence, to understand what happens to notions of self and other within this process, we need to go further than traditional approaches within the social identity literature are able to do. The aim is to 'shed light on how identifications of the "inside" link to the regulatory power of the discursive "outside"' (Barker, 1999: 18–19). This means comprehending why feelings of fear, loathing and even hatred creep into 'our' perceptions of 'them', and how these feelings act as common denominators in times of uncertainty. Here psychoanalysis has particular importance in order to understand the issue of securitized subjectivity, the search for one stable identity, in relation to the stranger-other.

Psychoanalysis revisited: the 'inner dimension' of identity and identity-conflict

Psychoanalytical accounts of identity and identity conflict, such as Bion's (1961), Craib's (1989, 1994), Kristeva's (1982, 1991), and Volkan's (1988, 1997) put an emphasis on understanding present actions in the light of both the past and the

future, at the same time as they provide explicit accounts of the emotional aspects of these processes. In their focus on the inner dimension of identity construction they are predominantly concerned with the construction of identity in the process of socialization, rather than with roles and status positions, as has been the case with many sociological theories of symbolic interactionism. Craib (1994), for instance, criticizes symbolic interactionsists, such as Jenkins, for putting too much emphasis on the external dimension of Mead's 'me' and thus omitting the unconscious and emotional dimensions of identity.[11] In a similar vein he argues that poststructuralists like Hall, or social constructionists like Burkitt or Gergen, who all give credit to a psychoanalytic dimension of identity, still reduce the unconscious to a social product, language, or reduce emotions to present social relations in society (Craib 1998, Vogler 2000). Instead Craib suggests that we must understand the emotional dimension of social identities and social relationship from the psychoanalytic concept of emotional subjectivity as recognized within the object-relations theory of psychoanalysis, especially as developed through the works of Klein and Winnicot.

I agree with Craib that too strong an emphasis on social context tends to ignore the emotional dimension of subjectivity which makes it difficult to understand the need for securitized subjectivity. However, a psychoanalytic focus cannot replace that of a more structural approach, only complement it. What psychoanalysis is able to do though, as Craib also suggests, is to give emphasis to the inner life of human beings by seeing individuals as linked not only structurally but also through emotional intersubjectivity, in which they continually receive and give emotional messages that often exist at an unconscious level. The emphasis is here on how discursively constructed subject positions are taken up by concrete persons through fantasy identifications and emotional 'investments' (see Barker 1999: 18–19).

The works of Vamik Volkan and Julia Kristeva[12] are, in my opinion, particularly valuable for providing such an additional understanding of the emotional dimension of securitized subjectivity.

> While there are many dissimilarities between the workings of the individual and the group mind, the tools of psychology, and especially of psychoanalysis, can shed light on group identity and behavior, not because they concern our unconscious drives or parts of psychosexual development, but because of the tacit assumption that each individual or group has complex and idiosyncratic ways of dealing with the demands of the inner and outer worlds.
>
> (Volkan 1997: 20)

Both Volkan and Kristeva emphasize the search for stable, clearly defined boundaries in the formation of self. Volkan uses object-relations theory to account for how we externalize and project our unwanted elements onto enemies. Departing from Freud's notion of group psychology as consisting of individuals who seek to satisfy the same vital needs through idealization, identification and love of the group based primarily on the Oedipus complex, Volkan suggests the analogy of a

large-scale tent to explore large-group psychology in a more comprehensive way. He invites us to think of ourselves in terms of learning to wear, from childhood on, two layers of clothing, where the first layer fits snugly (the personal identity) while the second layer (the social identity), is a loose covering that protects the individual in the way a parent, close family members, or other caregivers protect the subject (the ethnic, emotionally bonded large group). Because this garment is not tight-fitting, it also shelters other members of the group and thus resembles a large canvas tent. The members are not, as in Freud's interpretation, connected to each other because they love the same leader, but because they share the second layer while still wearing the first one. It is the leader's (the pole's) task to prevent the tent from collapsing and in times of shared anxiety and regression the members rally around the pole and become preoccupied with repairing and mending the tears in the canvas of the large-group tent (Volkan 1997: 27–29).

The individuals in the tent invest in shared reservoirs – for example, the flag, the song, the sauna – of what Volkan refers to as psychological DNA in the canvas of the tent, but over time a shared way of feeling about one's large group becomes more important than the concrete symbols themselves (Volkan 1997: 91). The introduction of traumatic events, such as globalization, is likely to raise anxiety in the tent and may jeopardize the collective sense of self in the tent. The response can be of at least three kinds and can be directed inwards towards the own large canvas tent or outward towards another smaller or larger tent. One possible response is repression, another is externalization and a third is the broader concept of projection. Repression basically entails hiding away unwanted fragments of the self while externalization may be simple denial, suggesting that the self is not responsible for an emotion or action, but rather that an object 'other' is to blame (Volkan 1997: 89). Projection, finally, requires not only a differentiation between self and other, but also a differentiation between acceptable and unacceptable mental representations (Murer 1999: 15). 'Because we externalize and project our unwanted elements onto enemies, they are also products of our fantasies' (Volkan 1997: 107). This implies that there is a striking resemblance between self and other, precisely because the other has been invested with the unwanted traits of the self.

> Because the enemy is a reservoir of unwanted self- and object representations within which elements of our projections are condensed, there should be some unconscious perception of a likeness, a reverse correspondence that binds us together while alienating us.
>
> (Volkan 1988: 99, as quoted in Murer 1999: 16)

Volkan's analogy of a canvas tent is interesting, but it has the problem of providing a picture of boundedness, of inside-out perceptions, rather than identity as a contested process. However, as a description of how categories are imagined as essentialized bodies, it is important and so is his emphasis on how traumatic events may affect a collective sense of self. A greater problem, as noted by Murer (1999), is to be found in Volkan's use of object-relations theory which, by view-

ing the other as an object, implies that the enemy-other *already* exists and *is* different from the self. This is problematic as it hints at an essentialist view of self and other rather than a relational one, as discussed earlier in regards to a social self. Volkan is not entirely clear on this issue, however, as on several occasions he implies that the idea of the enemy is intrapsychic at the same time as he keeps the notion of the other as object. He argues for instance that the closer the resemblance between the self and the other, the more likely the other is to become a suitable target for projection:

> First, although the groups may seem alike, they have minor differences. Second, rituals to maintain these major differences keep a psychological gulf between the opposing groups from killing one another. Attack only comes when playful ritualization of the preoccupation with minor differences is no longer maintained.
>
> (Volkan 1988: 102, as quoted in Murer 1999: 17)

By emphasizing how self and other become increasingly merged, he comes closer to Julia Kristeva's treatment of self and other as reflected in her differentiation between the other as object or abject.

The formation of we-images: the other as an object or an abject

Proceeding from a Lacanian (or neo-Lacanian) conception of the unconscious, Kristeva sees the creation of self as an internal psychological process. She suggests that the antidote to xenophobia, racism and the marginalization of others is to recognize the foreigner within ourselves. '(H)e is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself' (Kristeva, 1991: 1). The other exists in our minds through imagination even when (s)he is not physically present. The existence of anti-Semitism in Poland, despite its relative absence of Jews, is suggestive of this power of imagination (Murer 1999), and so is the fact that anti-immigrant feelings are sometimes stronger in places with few or no immigrants than in places that have experienced large immigration. This phenomenon is what Kristeva refers to as the 'strangers within ourselves'. The clash with the other,

> the identification of the self with that good or bad other that transgresses the fragile boundaries of the uncertain self, would thus be the source of an uncanny strangeness whose excessive features, /…/ cannot hide its permanent presence in normal psychical dynamics.
>
> (Kristeva 1991: 189)

This implies that the enemy-other is not only created by the self, but has previously been part of the self. This unconscious self is neither an object nor a subject, it is an *abject*. 'Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part,

from which one does not protect oneself as from an object' (Kristeva 1982: 4). It is a composite of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives (Kristeva 1982: 9–10). Kristeva's notion of an abject-other has the advantage of emphasizing the social side of self, how self is intersubjectively constructed even in our imagination. The other is always a part of ourselves. This other may not necessarily be an abject-other, but can assume a more neutral position in our imagination, as discussed earlier in relation to how various others are positioned differently depending on their structural position. The idea of an abject-other still remains significant though, as it focuses on how negative self-emotions become publicly expressed in response to rapid structural changes over which we feel we have no control. In such circumstances, the construction of an abject-other becomes a means to securitize subjectivity, as by projecting our fears and negative emotions onto another person or group, an abject, we are able to reduce anxiety and increase ontological security.

Abjection then is caused by that which disturbs identity, system or order, such as traumatic change in the light of globalization. Abject becomes a major ingredient of collective identity formation when the familiar 'stranger' is suddenly recognized as a threat. It is at this point the other as object ceases to be circumscribed, reasoned with, thrust aside, but becomes rejected and separated from the self, it appears as abject. Arguments, demonstrations, proofs, etc. – the very logic of the symbolic – must follow and conform to such abjection (Kristeva, 1982: 15). A number of past and current identity conflicts have shown how abjection happens time and again in neighbourhoods previously characterized by, perhaps not always amicable but at least cordial, relations between members of various groups. The horrendous activities following the creation of Pakistan in 1947, where Hindus and Muslims were turned against and slaughtered each other, is one example of this, while the looting and burning of Sikh homes in Delhi after Indira Gandhi had been shot by her Sikh bodyguards in 1994, provides another. As Ann Norton has noted, it is only when categories of self and other are empirically dubious that they emerge with clarity:

> (I)ndividual and collective identities are created not simply in the difference between self and other but in those moments of ambiguity where one is other to oneself, and in the recognition of the other as like.
>
> (Norton, 1988: 7)

Those aspects that the self experiences as dangerous and unpleasant are projected onto the other. Rather than existing in an objective sense, as Volkan argues, the differences between self and other are psychologically created and perceived by the self (Kristeva, 1982: 183–4). This adds weight to Kristeva's argument that, in the process of splitting, some aspects are valued and become integral to the newly constructed self, while others become devalued and externalized. Those aspects perceived as strange and alien within the newly constructed other are at the same time uncomfortably familiar because it is the self repressed (Kristeva 1991: 184, Murer 1999: 18).

However, the self does not, and cannot, acknowledge this relationship with the other but must label this previous component as foreign. Muslims in India, for instance, are interpreted by many Hindu nationalists as foreigners, despite the fact that most of them have lived there for centuries. Their real loyalties, the nationalists argue, are not with India but with Pakistan and the Middle East – two regions which constantly entice Indian Muslims away and threaten the Hindu nation. There is then, as Murer (1999: 19) has argued, a constant fear of the abject returning to reclaim its previous place within the self. It is the fear of the return of the repressed as such a return would destroy the new subjective sense of self and, at a group level, would undermine the newly re-established collective identity. It implies, in other words, that the abject is created through the self-deception that the other was never part of the self. The riots in Delhi directed against the Sikhs in 1984 reflected this pattern as Sikhs were no longer automatically guaranteed an entrance into the Indian society. From having been viewed as an entrenched part of the Hindu majority, they were debased into an alien other by certain Hindu groups. To assure the self of how it is essentially different from the other, the other needs to be systematically debased as without such debasement of the other:

> whom I reject and with whom I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container, the memory of experiences when I had been abandoned overwhelm me, I lose my composure. I feel “lost,” “indistinct,” “hazy”.
>
> (Kristeva, 1991: 187)

Debasement of the other thus captures the essential connection between fear and desire. By demonizing the other, the self becomes sufficiently sacralized. As a process it becomes a means of securitizing subjectivity as clear, often essentialized, notions of self and other emerge – who I am as compared to who I am not.

This is similar to Volkan’s discussion of projection and dehumanization. Here the other is often perceived as being dirty. In comparison to Kristeva, however, Volkan finds his explanations in childhood development. He argues that when members of a group regress in the face of stressful conditions (globalization, rapid changes, migration, trauma), they come close to experiencing their enemy as the original reservoir of unintegrated bad parts of their childhood selves. These reservoirs often contain nonhuman objects, such as a pig for a Muslim child or the turban for a Christian child. In the same manner, adults, when regressed, tend to reactivate a sense of experiencing the enemy as nonhuman by attaching symbols to enemy images, symbols originally evolved in childhood. So, for example, when children learn to appreciate cleanliness, they disown, psychologically speaking, their own waste and begin to see it as dirty. This is similar to how groups, through essentialization of the other, often perceive the enemy as dirty. When, for instance, ‘one group insists that the other has a darker color, smells bad, or does dirty deeds, they are rejecting the other as if they were feces’ (Volkan 1997: 113). The Hindu nationalist tendency to describe Muslims in a negative fashion by referring to facial hair features (‘beardy’ or ‘musky’), types of clothing, sexual obsession or

other essentialist 'traits', displays this preoccupation with cleanliness. Often, these descriptions are also connected to otherwise unrelated issues (or deeds), such as the slaughtering of cows, crime, drugs and terrorism.

Within this process prejudice is used as a means to differentiate one group from the other (similar to Kristeva's use of arguments and proofs as following upon abjection), and in order to retain their group identity. Rituals that foster such prejudice, ethnic jokes for instance, are effective in psychologically securing group identity. Often dehumanization is done in stages, where the enemy is first demonized but retains some qualities, while later he or she may be rendered as vermin and completely dehumanized. In Rwanda, for instance, Hutu first referred to Tutsi as evil, but later began calling them *cafards*, meaning cockroaches. Hurting or killing cockroaches induce less guilt than killing humans would do (Volkan 1997: 113). In a similar sense, Muslims are frequently made into animals by Hindu extremists – often in a sexualized way. Either they are portrayed as overly aggressive sexualized beings that will rape innocent Hindu virgins, or they are portrayed as rabbits with excessive fertility that will spread the Muslim race if left alone.[13]

In Kristeva's terminology dehumanization occurs as the collective image of the self is so severely damaged that the self engages in abjection. The abject then becomes the repository for the qualities associated with the loss: cowardliness, treachery, and betrayal. The other is viewed with contempt, as a despicable and worthless nonhuman. As argued by Murer (1999: 27), once the other has been so thoroughly reduced to inhumanity, any required act to maintain the boundaries of self and other can be justified. Hatred then becomes part of the new definition of the self by providing a sense of self-sameness for the group, thus strengthening feelings of mutual identity. The stranger, in other words, is turned into the enemy. As Huysmans notes (1998: 241),

> (d)ifferent from enemies, strangers are disordering because they express the possibility of chaos within the existing order. /…/ Strangers are both inside and outside a society; they are insiders/outsiders. They articulate ambivalence and therefore challenge the (modern) ordering activity which relies on reducing ambiguity and uncertainty by categorizing elements.

By ordering the other both structurally (e.g. immigrants as 'bogus' asylum seekers) and psychologically (by turning the stranger into an enemy), a discourse of exclusion is constructed. Prejudice and racism are, in other words, reproduced in discourse *with* as well as *about* the others (van Dijk 1997: 144), which means that, although the antagonists may 'hate' each other, they psychologically need each other. Hence the identification of others, *their* definition according to criteria of *our* adoption (which they may neither accept nor recognize), is often a feature of identifying ourselves (Jenkins 1996: 83). As noted by anthropologist Howard Stein, 'enemies are neither "merely" projections, nor are they "merely" real' (as quoted in Volkan 1997: 107). They are both.

> The state of being a stranger is of course a completely positive relation.... The stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry "inner enemies" – an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it
>
> (Simmel 1970, quoted in Neumann 1999: 11)

Those who do not (seem to) subscribe to a common belief system thus challenge the very foundation of the group. In Punjab in the early eighties, for instance, religious leaders like Bhindranwale focused on creating a new, narrower, definition of what it meant to be a Sikh. A real Sikh should reject consumerism, abstain from alcohol and make religious values a central part of their lives. This new identity should be defended if violated. 'Like a besieged city, the movement must strengthen its walls against the enemy without and search for enemies within. True belief does not permit question and doubt' (Robins and Post, 1997: 94–95). Such a discourse, as Vivienne Jabri (1996: 130) has shown, articulates separateness, limitations to access and strict boundedness. It divides self and other into deserving and guilty parts. The other, in being turned from stranger to enemy, is increasingly viewed as a nonhuman.

This process of turning the stranger into an enemy is an attempt to securitize subjectivity in times of uncertainty. It involves, in Kristeva's terminology, a construction of an abject-other onto which negative aspects of self can be projected and acted upon. Within this process both self and other become essentialized bodies and reduced to a number of cultural characteristics. These characteristics, although constructed and fabricated, come to be seen as natural, unified features for describing the group.

Trauma, fear and the use of historical and archaeological 'evidence' in the process

In this process of securitizing subjectivity, hate becomes the link between the present, the future and a re-created past. In this sense it serves as a social chain for successive generations as a particular event or trauma becomes mythologized and intertwined with a group's sense of self. As observed by Murer (1999: 26–7), it is this process which often leads people to conclude that ethnic conflicts are timeless. This is what Volkan (1997: 36) refers to as a 'Chosen Trauma'. A Chosen Trauma describes the mental recollection of a calamity once befallen a group's ancestors and includes information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings and defences against unacceptable thought. As a concept it is useful for understanding how feelings of 'ancient hatred' are constructed and maintained. These are not, as today's mass media often make them out to be, primordial feelings of hatred or ingrained hostilities waiting to break out in a largely chaotic world. Instead, they are structural and psychological make-ups that manifest themselves in Chosen Traumas.

Chosen Traumas – and their opposites 'Chosen Glories' (which may be reactivated to bolster a group's self-esteem) (Volkan, 1997: 81) – thus provide com-

forting stories in times of increased ontological insecurity and existential anxiety. They are the means through which subjectivity becomes securitized in relation to others. Most comforting among these stories are those which provide a feeling of home, stability and continuity as individuals and groups are beset by experiences of loss, alienation and helplessness. A Chosen Trauma is often used to interpret new traumas. It brings with it powerful experiences of loss and feelings of humiliation, vengeance, and hatred that trigger a variety of unconscious defence mechanisms that attempt to reverse these experiences and feelings. Every new context is used to validate these feelings (Volkan, 1997: 82). As I show in chapter five, the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984 has worked as a Chosen Trauma for many Sikhs living abroad, being interpreted as it was as an assault on their religion and therefore justifying the idea of an independent *Khalistan*. The homeland issue became connected with religious identity in order to affect the multicultural policies of the host societies and the Chosen Trauma of the Golden Temple was for many diaspora Sikhs intermeshed with previous traumatic experiences in their new countries of residence.

Humans, Volkan argues, cannot accept change without mourning what is lost. We can mourn loved ones, or possessions, but we can also mourn the loss of persons or things that we hate since hate, like love, connects us deeply to each other (Volkan 1997: 36). This is similar to Giddens' argument that a marriage that has come apart tends to be mourned, no matter how unhappy or desperate the partners may have been while they were together (Giddens 1991: 10–11). When no mourning process occurs, the result is often a long-term persistence of hurt feeling, which may result in despair and psychological breakdown.

In cases when loss or death remain insufficiently mourned, the mourner identifies indiscriminately with the dead, taking in both the loved and the hated aspects, wanting simultaneously to keep and destroy the image of the deceased. Often the perennial mourner lives symbolically in the life of the dead, using linking objects (such as a favourite toy of the dead child) to remain in contact with the dead.

Volkan (1997: 36–49) argues that, like individuals, large groups also mourn. The influence of a specific trauma or a severe and humiliating calamity that affects a large group forges a link between the psychology of the individual and that of the group. After such an event, mental images and stories begin to unfold as shared feelings, perceptions, fantasies, and interpretations of the event take place. Included in this process are mental defences against painful or unacceptable feelings and thoughts. When such mental representations remain unresolved and continue to be experienced as persistent humiliation they are likely to affect the members of the group negatively. They become perennial mourners and as such their traumatized self-images are passed down to later generations in the hope that others may be able to mourn and resolve what the prior generation could not.

These images make up what Volkan refers to as the transmitted 'psychological DNA' of the younger generation through its relationship with the former one. The use of DNA is unfortunate as it conjures up images of genetic inheritance.

Thus, to avoid a primordial reading of Volkan it is important to remember that what is transmitted is changing within the process of transmission. Chosen Traumas and Chosen Glories provide, in other words, the linking objects for later generations to be rediscovered, reinterpreted and reused. Memories of a past trauma may lay dormant for generations, only to be rediscovered as a collectivity experiences a new or secondary trauma which may have little to do with the first Chosen Trauma (Murer, 1999). A political leader may for instance reignite a dormant group memory by reactivating (or reinventing, reinterpreting) the original injury or glory (Volkan 1997: 46).

Despite this second trauma having little to do with the first one, the self may defend against the loss by perceiving it as continued oppression by the original 'victimizing' enemy-other. The linking cycle can thus be found in the repeated usage of the abject-other created during the Chosen Trauma, as it allows the younger generation to experience the pain and the loss of their elders. Also, as argued by Murer (1999: 30), '(B)y expanding the Chosen Trauma to include losses associated with secondary trauma, the group self "reinvents" the previously ascribed abject with the traits necessary to be applicable in the new case. The "old" enemy-other is, therefore responsible for "new" losses'. In India, for instance, mosques like the Babri Masjid and similar sacred places are increasingly being portrayed as symbols of Hindu subjection during the times of the Mughuls. This, as discussed in chapter six, makes their destruction a necessary part of the emancipatory movement of the Hindus at the same time as it denies creativity to the Muslims. The linking cycle can be found in the repeated usage of the same abject-other as it allows the younger generation to experience the pain and the loss of their elders.

Both Chosen Traumas and Chosen Glories are intimately connected to images of the nation and to religion. In looking for the nation, nationalism needs to demonstrate that the nation it wishes to create has always existed. Traumas, through which the nation was lost, such as colonialization, are at the heart of this search. In this sense they are frequently loaded with affective images of what was before the 'rape of the nation' by the colonial masters. Such narratives are often deeply rooted in religious discourse, relating the present search for the nation to a glorified past prior to colonialization. Religious and cultural rituals and ritualistic observances of anniversaries can serve to sustain the trauma and feed into the continued demonization of the other while sacralizing the self.

The attempt is to trace the (constructed) genealogy of an identity group back to a specific place, time and ancestor in order to derive an ideological lineage and to provide a guide for future actions. This is accomplished through the use of symbols, memories, myths and heritage that aim to uncover the so-called 'original' event. Here religion is a powerful source to draw upon as it supplies a number of abstract symbols that can be turned into physical objects or tangible events. Hence, religious revelations are turned into national shrines; religious miracles become national feasts and Holy Scriptures are reinterpreted as national epics. By turning history into a chosen trauma or a chosen glory, it becomes a 'naturalized' past of an identity group's definition of self and other (Smith 2000: 806). The

combination of empiricist verification of so called 'facts' and the spread of mass media has played an important part in this process (Aggestam and Kinnvall 2002).

This is particularly visible in those cases where archaeology is used together with ancient texts as a means of conjuring up negative images, stereotypes and xenophobic prejudices of the other. Archaeology and historical verifications of certain myths and events can thus be employed to fuel the dynamics of violent conflicts. Such myths are commonly used not only for constructing, cementing and mobilizing an identity group, but also for constructing an other upon which emotions can be directed in a conflictual situation. As argued by Coningham and Lewer (2000), the verification of archaeology and historical evidence is crucial in the consolidation of an identity. Hence, in areas experiencing violent conflicts we see an upsurge in the manipulation and re-interpretation of historical and archaeological evidence to support claims of precedence to land and rights for particular identity groups.

Both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East and the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India show, for instance, how Chosen Traumas have been verified through a historical and archaeological process. Israeli archaeology has deciphered the historical landscape of *Eretz Yisrael* and Indian material findings have established a physical foundation of the *Hindu Rashtra* – the Hindu nation. As a result, several historical places have been turned into sacred and national sites, which serve as Chosen Traumas linking the past of their ancestors to contemporary times (Aggestam and Kinnvall 2002).

Kristeva and Volkan both give psychological explanations to group conflict. As such they inevitably draw parallels between the psychological make-up of the individual and that of the group. As a consequence they could be accused of reductionism in the sense mentioned earlier. However, in agreement with the previous discussion around 'context-bound' and 'context-traversing' identities as both consisting of a social self, where the former refers to intersubjective human relations while the latter has to do with the telling of an 'as if' story, their explanations must be read in this wider sense. Hence both Kristeva's and Volkan's accounts constitute 'as if' stories – 'as if' the group is behaving similar to an individual whose (constructed) definition of her social self suddenly feels threatened by traumatic events. Also, their psychological accounts provide a perspective that is frequently ignored in much social science research which, out of fear of reductionism, often does not provide any psychological explanations at all. Hence it is true that in isolation Volkan's and Kristeva's accounts may be lacking in structural explanation. However, they add an important dimension to the larger picture of identity-politics which is all too often neglected in work on globalization, identity, nationalism and group conflict.

What Kristeva and Volkan show in their different interpretations is how feelings of 'ancient hatred' are constructed and maintained. These are not primordial feelings of hatred or century-old animosities that have lain dormant for generations just waiting to flair up at any time. Even critical scholars like Barber (1996), who disputes the historical fatalism of such discourses, still buys into them by

talking about the 'retribalization of the world'. When, for example, a Hindu leader dresses like Rama with bow and arrow in hand, he is doing more than acting out a preordained history or exercising a pregiven subjectivity; he is reproducing and rearticulating a historical representation (a Chosen Trauma) as a means to constitute his present subjective and collective identity – his social self (see Campbell 1996: 174). Both Volkan's and Kristeva's texts are attempts to explain the psychological make-up that gives rise to such Chosen Traumas.

They are both concerned with the role of aggression in human beings, and how and why investment in emotionally bonded groups sometimes leads to mass violence and horrifying acts. By emphasizing the other as a mental image, an intrapsychic abject-other, onto which the self projects it's (or the group's) unwanted traits, we may escape the tendency to describe conflicts in essentialized terms. The emphasis on traumatic events, shared anxiety, regression, stressful conditions, disturbances, also brings attention to the emotional aspects of human relatedness as defined in (global) structural terms. In combination with the significance given to Chosen Traumas and Chosen Glories and the belief in 'verification' of history, it becomes increasingly clear that we must understand the need for securitized subjectivity as existing in the nexus of structural and psychological processes – that is, security as a thick signifier. Globalization is a pertinent issue in this respect as it displays all the possible features of causing emotional traumas of alienation, loss of self-esteem, and images of lost objects such as territory. As individuals experience increased levels of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety in relation to global forces, the search for securitized subjectivity is likely to increase. This raises the question of what possible group reactions may arise in response to this search?

The final chapter of part one, chapter three, will deal with these possible group reactions. Here I will argue that, in response to global traumatic changes, it may actually be easier to construct an identity out of essentialist or primordialist notions of nationhood and/or religion than out of other identity-signifiers, based on, for instance, language, gender, caste, class or race (only to mention a few). This has to do with the fact that both nationalism and religion allow for categorical abstraction and Chosen Traumas in a sense that other identity constructions are unable to do. They are thus likely to provide answers to issues of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety to a greater extent – fulfilling the search for securitized subjectivity.

3 Nationalism and religion as securitizers of subjectivity: local responses to global destabilization

As noted in the previous chapter, nationalism and religion are both intimately linked to Chosen Traumas and Chosen Glories. This link makes them particularly powerful identity-signifiers in times of uncertain structural conditions, with the implication that they are likely to become more persuasive rallying points than other identity-signifiers. There are at least two reasons for this. One is the close link between the history of individualism and the Enlightenment project, and that of nationalism and religion. Another is the close relationship between nationalism/religion and hierarchical race and gender structures. In the following two sections I will show how these links make nationalism and religion appear as more 'convincing' responses to the individual need for securitized subjectivity than other identity-signifiers. For clarification it should be noted that I give prominence to those aspects of nationalism and religion that make them powerful identity-signifiers in times of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety. These are the aspects that make fundamentalism possible in regards to both nationalism and religion. This is not to say that either nationalism or religion is fundamentalist per se or that they cannot also be positive forces.

Linking nationalism and religion: individualism and the enlightenment project

Literature around nation and nationalism had an upsurge in the 1990s, largely as a response to the perception that the scale and intensity of violent conflict appeared to have increased with the collapse of communism in Europe and the end of the Cold War. Nationalism thus came to be viewed as a defining feature of various conflicts, such as those taking place in Chechnya, East Timor, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Jammu-Kashmir, Nagorno-Karabakh, Rwanda or Yugoslavia, in a similar way to how religion has come to be the defining feature of other conflictual areas, like Aceh, Gujarat, Northern Ireland, Southern Thailand or Pakistan. On the surface these conflicts, and others like them, have been portrayed as having to do with ethnic groups asserting their difference and demanding a separate nation-state – often in combination with religion. Such descriptions are obviously problematic as they represent a belief that there exists some kind of objective primordial relationship between either a territory and a group or a specific religion and a group – or both.

This problem is also at the core of the ongoing theoretical debate on the extent to which nations actually exist. The question of whether nations are real or imagined is related to the issue of what came first: nations or nationalism? The idea of the nation-state is commonly described as originating from the Treaty of Westphalia concluded in 1648 in what was to become Germany. Since then it has become an almost universal principle, built upon the intellectual foundation that a nation should be the basis for identifying distinctive groups of people who are to produce their own government. Nationalism, in this classical version, has been considered the movement in which the nation-state is regarded as paramount for the realization of social, economic, and cultural aspirations of 'a people', characterized by a feeling of community among a people, based on common descent, language and religion.[1]

Nationalism, although closely associated with the nation, is thus first and foremost a theory about the nature and proper mode of constituting the state. Similar to the concept of nation, nationalism is difficult to date. However, in its current usage it is a distinctively modern phenomenon and has been traced to the tensions leading to the English Civil War (Greenfeld 1992), to the Latin American independence movements (Anderson 1991), to the French Revolution (Alter 1989), and to German reaction and Romanticism (Kedourie 1994; see Calhoun 1997). It is a way of constructing collective identities that arose in attempts to redefine state power.

This is not to say that states simply created nations or that nations simply created states, although we have a number of states (particularly in the West) which have continued to draw on long-standing ethnic identities, on local kinship and community networks, and on claimed connections to ancestral territories. The German immigration law was, until recently, an outstanding example in this regard. What it does say, however, is that the content and specific orientation of various nationalisms is influenced by historically (perceived) distinct cultural traditions, the creative actions of leaders, and contingent situations within the international order. As argued by Calhoun (1997: 123):

> Nationalism draws on cultural traditions and ethnicity, but neither its form nor its historically specific prevalence in the modern era is explained by these factors. Rather, it is necessary to look first and foremost at the ways in which nationalism constitutes a discursive formation that both shapes and attempts to cope with the rise of the modern state.

Nationalism, in this sense, plays a crucial role in the modern discourse of political legitimacy and the construction of the state. The rise of the 'modern' state in Europe after the absolute monarchies was thus based on the unification of territories, reliance on popular participation and the assertion of clear borders rather than frontiers. It involved the settlement of people within state boundaries, fostering internal integration and homogenization. The growing importance of nationalism was founded on the idea that political power should reflect the will of 'the people'. Such 'a people' were seen as a unified force and the ideal was that

the boundaries of the state should reflect those of the nation (see Calhoun 1997: 66–85, Giddens 1984).

Nation as individual – rationality and modernity as defining features

The most influential idea behind nationalism thus came to be the notion of the individual self as a united, self-sufficient and self-contained entity – a 'universal self'. This self takes its point of departure in the historically embodied form of the Enlightenment, connecting reason, knowledge, progress, freedom and ethical action into a combined label of progress and modernity.[2] The main structural arrangement that makes this self-moving individual into a united whole is the modern state. By necessity this entails a conformative process, where institutions tend to essentialize individuals by providing them with identities based on historically specific traits, which are then claimed to be those of human nature. As noted by Bhikhu Parekh (1995), the modern state feels deeply uneasy in the presence of well-organized rival foci of loyalty as the abstracted modern state requires socially abstracted individuals as its necessary counterpart.[3]

In this vein modernists, such as Elie Kedourie, Ernest Gellner and Tom Nairn, all assumed that nations were invented but once formed they constituted 'real' communities of culture and power. They were what Emile Durkheim would have called 'social facts', and as such constituted the largest and most powerful social actors on the political stage. The ethnic group is here viewed as the common point of origin of a nation. Hence every society and population must strive to build a nation where none had existed, as the nation is viewed as the only tested framework for economic and social development.[4] The ontology behind the modernist project is thus similar to the more general instrumentalist emphasis on the value of nationality as an organizing construct for collections of individuals who share common interests and need to mobilize for collective action. Instrumentalist perspectives thus draw attention to the constructed nature of shared interests and accentuate how national or other identities may be mobilized and manipulated by elites (see e.g. Brass 1991, Gurr and Harff 1994, Young 1976).

Ernest Gellner (1983), for instance, focuses his analysis on the rational economic and social system of industrialization, postulating the disappearance of primordial ties and traditional loyalties and the emergence of a democratic and rational 'man'. This is often viewed as the liberal expectancy of the First World, while the radical expectancy of the Second World assumed that a 'socialist man' would emerge who would abandon narrow loyalties to the 'fatherland'. In comparison, the nationalist expectancy of the Third World presumed that the citizens of the new states would waive their particularistic identities and loyalties in favour of building the 'nation' (see Oommen 1997: 10–11).

Both instrumentalist and modernist approaches have problems in explaining circumstances when people identify with groups for reasons other than those purely instrumental or economic. Emotional aspects of belonging or other needs

for identification and bonding are often overlooked and so is the desire for mutual recognition and community building. The tendency to create the 'other' for more than instrumental purposes is also disregarded. Seeing the emergence of Hindu nationalism as an expression of common economic and political objectives disregards, for instance, both the emotive aspects of constructing a Muslim 'other' and the fact that many Hindus do not believe in Hindu nationalism. And even those Hindus in favor of Hindu nationalism may support it for different reasons, not all economic or rational. To be a Brahmin Hindu, for instance, means something very different from being a Dalit Hindu, both in terms of self-categorization and in terms of how others position you into categories of Brahmins and Dalits. Similarly, Sikh nationalism cannot be understood apart from the feelings of dislocation experienced by Sikh groups in the diaspora. Neither can it be generalized to account for the entire Sikh population of Punjab, many of whom still remain very ambiguous about the notion of a Sikh state of *Khalistan*.

These problems have led a number of writers within the field of nationalism and nation-building to criticize instrumentalist, often modernist, approaches to nationhood. Anthony Smith (1999: 7), for instance, speaks of the 'modernist failure to come to grips with cultural identity (…) [which] renders its explanation partial and one-sided'. Others, like Benedict Anderson or Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, give greater significance to the more constructed aspects of nationality, ethnicity and even of shared interest. From this perspective, the nation and ethnic group become cultural artifacts that are manifest in a system of collective imaginings and symbolic representations. As constructivists they point out that ethnic or national consciousness tends to arise during periods of crisis, such as rapid modernization, and is 'brokered' by intellectual entrepreneurs who construct national histories, traditions, perceived interests, and even languages (Anderson 1983, Hobsbawm 1964, and Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The nation and ethnic group thus become cultural artifacts of modernity.

Hence, some of these critics side with the modernists in their emphasis on principal material preconditions for nationalism. For Benedict Anderson, for instance, the beginning of the nation is dependent upon media through the rise of print capitalism. However, unlike Gellner, Anderson is concerned with exploring the psychological appeal of nationalism. The title, *Imagined Communities,* refers to the mental processes involved in nationalism, as members of larger communities cannot possibly know each other and therefore must rely on imagination when relating to the larger collective, such as the nation. Still, Anderson has been criticized from both a postcolonial perspective and on ontological grounds. Partha Chatterjee (1993: 5), for instance, argues that Anderson violates the concept of the 'imagined' as he insists on nationalism's modular quality:

> If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? /…/ Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized.

On ontological grounds Anderson has been criticized for privileging being over becoming or universalism over particularism (see Ullock 1996, in Neumann 1999: 177). As argued by Christoph Ullock:

> At an even more elementary level, while Anderson's initial discussion of nationalism involves a metaphysics of *becoming*, his discussion of nationalism is imbued with a metaphysics of *being*, incapable of recognising how recent changes in communication and transportation technology might impact upon processes central to imagining community.
>
> (Ullock 1996: 427–8, quoted in Neumann 1999: 177)

Erik Hobsbawm and Terence Rangers (1983; see also Hobsbawm 1991), in comparison, have been criticized for doing quite the opposite; for disregarding any modular quality of the nation at all. In their joint work, *The Invention of Tradition*, they study a number of cases in Africa in which national 'traditions' have been 'invented' by state-building elites. They demonstrate how the new states would invent mythical historical accounts of the pre-colonial (primordialist) roots of the nation in order to create a unified national culture. Although many agree with Hobsbawm and Ranger about the invented character of much national tradition, a number of scholars have argued that the more dubious part of their argument is the implication that demonstrating invention invalidates traditions (e.g. Calhoun 1997: 34, Oommen 1997: 38).

Here we can see parallels in the critiques of Hobsbawm and Rangers and that of Anderson. If Anderson saw the nation as one of modular quality, implying the legacy of some kind of 'primordial' traits in the construction process, then Hobsbawm and Rangers see such 'primordialism' in long-standing traditions, in contrast to various nationalist traditions that are of recent and manipulative creation. In both cases, however, the ontological critique would be similar as being is privileged over becoming. Oommen tries to escape this ontological trap by arguing that, regardless of who created particular identities, what is important is why certain labels stuck and not others. 'I would suggest' Oommen argues (1994: 38):

> that it is because they struck a familiar chord, fulfilled an emotional need and provided a shorthand device to communicate certain aspects shared alike by all the people under reference, be it a common homeland, religion, language or civilization. Thus, some of the constructed identities become acceptable precisely because they contain a primordial element, which is construed as 'sacred' by the collectivity concerned.

One can question, however, if Oommen really succeeds in escaping this ontological trap as focus remains on the notion of something defined as 'primordial'. To avoid essentialist readings of nation and culture, we must recognize the socially constructed aspects of tradition. As Calhoun (1997: 34) has noted, all traditions are created; none are truly primordial and all such creations are also potentially contested and subject to continual explicit or hidden reshaping.

As a discourse, however, nationalism relies on a construction of the *nation-as-this* and the *people-as-one*, which are supposed to guide social and political action in the name of a particular *ethnos* (being Indian for instance) and a certain imagined national space (India as the locus of Indianness) (Torfing 1999: 193). As noted by Reicher and Hopkins (2001: 51), 'if national mobilization depends upon national identity, then establishing identity depends upon embedding it within an essentializing historical narrative'. The fact that these essentialist attributes are called upon to mobilize people into collective action should not lead us to believe that they are attributes of a nation, however, as nationhood cannot be defined objectively, prior to political processes, on either cultural or social structural grounds (Calhoun 1994: 132). Rather, nations are in part made by nationalism and exist only when their members make sense of themselves through the discursive framework of national identity.

The modern state provides such a discursive framework. Through its reliance on sovereignty and its continued insistence on borders and territorial jurisdiction, it displays patterns of inclusion and exclusion. This implies that if culture is understood through the principle of state sovereignty it can only refer to the diversity of national cultures. Such a unity of the nation is constructed in a narrative form by which stories, images, symbols and rituals represent 'shared' meanings of nationhood. National identity, in other words, becomes a way of unifying cultural diversity. The modern state-system thus offers a way to aspire to the universal inside in comparison to the violent particularities outside; 'a spatial order in which history can unravel as it should and a spatial disorder in which contingent forces can only clash as they must' (Walker 1993: 177). This emphasis on the world as anarchical, with sovereign states providing the solution to a disorganized chaos, continues to give an illusion of national (and cultural) homogeneity. But it is and remains an illusion, despite its obvious appeal. As argued by Stuart Hall (1992: 297):

> Instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity. They are cross-cut by deep internal differences, and 'unified' only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power.

What this means is that there is no one version of nation or nationalism, no single features or identifiable factors that combine into some kinds of national characteristics. Neither is nations (or nationalisms) intrinsically secular categories as often expressed in the modernist discourse. Rather they can rest on exclusivist racial, tribal or religious grounds. As the case of India tells us (as highlighted in the case studies), the most ardent spokespersons for nationhood have been religious groups.[5]

Religion as individual – self and other in religious discourse

The term religion originates from either the Latin term 'religare' which means unite, tie together, or from the term 'relegere', meaning to read through, to closely

attend to something. Religion as a phenomenon is difficult to date. However, understood as autonomous religious communities it became increasingly universalized during the period of the Enlightenment in a similar sense to how the nation emerged into an almost universal ideal during this time. As a consequence, religion(s) came to refer to different autonomous bodies existing side by side or in conflict with each other, similar to the idea of nation-states. Religion thus shares many of the characteristics of the nation, and religion and nationalism are often mixed.

Despite this being the case, the religious element in the study of nationalist movements is often neglected or dismissed. According to Gertrud Himmelfarb (in Haynes 1999: 32), this has to do with religion being viewed as the opposite of the Enlightenment's principles of rationalism, universalism, secularism and materialism. Another reason can be found in the extent to which religion, compared to the nation, is viewed as being de-territorialized – as being transnational rather than circumscribed by geographical boundaries. However, as clarified below, these arguments ignore the similarities between the individual self of the Enlightenment tradition as manifest in nationalism and the bases of religious identity. Thus, in comparison to other discursive identity constructions, both national and religious identity make claims to a monolithic and abstract identity, i.e. to *one* stable identity that answers to the need for securitized subjectivity (Kinnvall 2004b). Through its persistent confrontation with modernity, religion has increasingly come to be seen as a distinct 'entity' that is clearly distinguishable from less religious existential spheres. In this process, religion takes the shape of a monolithic entity that can be traced to time immemorial. As a clearly defined body it thus becomes a stabilizing anchor in an otherwise chaotic and changing world, linking the past and the present to future action.

Like the nation, religion thus consists of a discursive, often essentialist, view of its realm as an organic whole, as an individual whose various dimensions are inextricably linked and defined in terms of (essentialist) cultural characteristics. This always involves a process of institutionalization. To retain their institutionalized identity in some form or other, all religions have to maintain themselves, and to do so they have to have some superior claim to a particular notion of truth and mode of earthly existence (Alam 1999; see also Bidwai *et al.* 1996, Dobratz 2002, Gordon 1978). In a similar sense to how the nation, in the absence of nationalism, may exist discursively in people's self-definition while lacking in power, non-institutionalized religion may be a matter of personal faith, piety and inner experience, but once institutionalized it becomes interested in maintaining its hold on the populace and social institutions.

Institutionalized religion (despite being transnational) often concurs with the nation as being territorially defined as it refers to *bounded* entities, such as churches, organizations or political parties (Haynes 1997).[6] In this form, religion, like nationalism, supplies existential answers to individuals' quests for security by essentializing the product and providing a picture of totality, unity, and wholeness. The fact that God has set the rules and made them difficult to contest relieves the individual psychologically from the responsibility of having to

choose (Jurgensmeyer 2000, Mol 1976). By supplying a consistent structure, religion thus provides order from the chaos and uncertainty in the world. In doing this, religion and nationalism both provide answers to Giddens' questions concerning existence itself, the external world and human life, the existence of the other, and what self-identity actually is.[7] In providing answers to these questions, they also institute a notion of 'truth', implying an automatic exclusion of those who do not adhere to such a 'truth'. Religion, especially in its monotheistic form, thus provides a foundation for the creation of intolerance against those who do not share in these beliefs. Othering becomes, in other words, a fundamental part of the closing of religious boundaries.

The idea of immortalized religion also forecloses further exploration into faith itself, as it relies on the belief that religious experience goes beyond truth and falsehood as conventionally understood – by providing a perspective that can only be interpreted and justified from within. 'To believe is to understand, to understand is to believe' (Vainak 1997: 72). However, as elegantly argued by Achin Vainak (1997), faith has epistemic status because experiences and identities have epistemic status. When discussing religious experience this relationship is often ignored, as religion is framed as being above experience. What goes into non-religious experiences and identities – beliefs, values, desires – can thus be argued against, interpreted in different ways, evaluated, more or less humane, and so on, while the idea of religion as being above experience cannot be argued with because it supplies an eternal truth. The idea of religion as being above experience is therefore immensely persuasive as it relies upon the notion that faith cannot be contested because religion provides an infinite and true reality.

In this regard, there is obviously a difference between religion in a more fundamentalist form and religion as a cultural experience, where the latter may have an empathetic relation with political power even when opposed to it, as well as a readiness to accommodate secular thought (see Haynes 1997). However, both forms of religion (like nationalism) may constitute a means to resist too much fluidity in the interpretation of their borders. Nandy's (1997: 157–8) argument that secularism as an ideology can thrive only when that society is predominantly non-secular, is of relevance here. The point Nandy makes is that once a society becomes secularized, in the sense that people become more aware of the fact that they live in an increasingly desacralized world, they tend to resist this change by searching for ideologies linked to faiths that can help in negating the world they live in.[8]

This points to the contradictory nature of religion as it is confronted by modernity. In responding to forces of modernity, religion needs to create an origin that has existed beyond time and history. In doing this, however, it often has to buy into the modernist discourse. Hindu nationalism, for instance, denies evidence of historical change in its attempts to create an imagined eternal nation. At the same time, as discussed in chapter six, its nationalist narrative is distinguished by a modern, empirical search for historical facts and archaeological data. In this search, Hindu nationalism has been strongly influenced by the historical experience of colonialism and by mainstream Western historiography (see van der Veer

1996; see also Deol 2000). As argued by Jurgensmeyer (2000: 387), there is a tendency to tell stories of ancient Christianity and early Islam as being elaborated forms of mythology, while Hinduism takes on an aura of factualism among many of its believers.

Globalization, privatization, consumerism and the spread of Western ideas and practices have been effective in speeding up such empiricist fact-finding processes. In response to these modern developments, religious leaders may talk about moral or ethical decline by pointing to modern society's lack of morality, loss of ethical values, increased corruption, and so on, where the only answer to the current 'decay' is a return to traditional values and religious norms. This is related to the fact that most religions have the destruction of evil as a fundamental part of the religious discourse, carrying with it images of chaos, terror and destruction (Beyer 1994, Jurgensmeyer 2000). In various forms, heaven and hell provide an overarching cosmology, where the imminent and transcendental can become manifest in terms of (real) categories and social relationships. 'People, in other words, come to imagine transcendent cosmic order in terms of the rules that govern their everyday lives and vice versa' (Beyer 1994: 83). The key to unity is similar to the idea of a state constitution, as it assumes that everybody lives by the same code.

> Anyone who does not, for whatever reason, acknowledge and live by this code denies God and invites chaos, death, or failure. Such a person is the morally and religious other; and can legitimately be seen as an apostate, an outcast, the one beyond the pale. To the extent that such outsiders had the opportunity to become insiders, they could be 'saved' not simply by abstract morally good behavior, but only by religious conversion.
>
> (Beyer 1994: 85)

This is akin to how members of an (imagined) nation must become true believers in those (constructed) cultural attributes that differentiate one nation from another. In the state-structure of international relations such differentiation may take the form of citizenship and a pledge of allegiance. The values underlying such pledges refer to institutionalized codes of conduct, ranging from formal laws or legal constraints to rules, norms and moral codes in general. Religion, like the state structure, has ideological underpinnings. Hence, religion is never a solely psychological experience based on the individual mind, but it also has ideological functions that serve oppressive interests. *Nomization*, or the order of meaning in society, is never neutral or altogether positive but is mediated through social relations (Vanaik 1997, Haynes 1997).

The moralization of religion in response to forces of modernity has increasingly resulted in that social and other problems are interpreted as consequences of the violation of religious norms. Only by conforming to such norms can solutions to existential problems be found. Conformity thus provides a way to become an insider by defining who you are in the social system (and who you are not). Becoming an insider can simply be about subscribing to religion in a priva-

tized form, but it can also mean to become part of a larger social movement that seeks wider public influence. In both cases the community, like the nation, is imagined. However, in the latter case these social movements are often pitted against secular historians on the one hand and against rival notions of what constitutes a particular religion in terms of tradition and history, on the other. The cosmic struggle that goes on inside, in the minds of the globalized persons, is thus brought together with the historical cosmic struggle of the group or the movement.

Clear boundaries around the own religion and attacks against other religious interpretations become defensible through the conviction that the sacred struggle is not only a thing of the past, but must be continued into the present and the future. The sacred struggle thus builds upon a Chosen Trauma which gets redefined as secondary traumas in the process. As Jurgensmeyer (2000: 388–89), has pointed out, Sikh followers of Bhindranwale were tempted by his insistence that they need not bear the warfare of the soul alone, but could together continue the struggle against the foes in the external arena. As an increasing number of Sikhs experienced ontological insecurity and existential anxiety, they needed to find a way to securitize subjectivity. Religion provided such a way – thus illuminating how security works as a thick signifier.

Here the close relationship between modernity on the one hand and religious and secular nationalism on the other becomes important – especially in postcolonial societies. The relationship between religious and secular nationalists began during the colonial era and was played out in relation to the dissolution of colonial empires. The question that has occupied religious and secular nationalists in postcolonial societies has had to do with how the postcolonial state should be constituted, whether it should be secular, democratic, religious, or any other defining feature. The fact that many postcolonial societies settled for a secular version of nationhood inherited from the colonizers as a way to bridge religious (or other) tension, has simultaneously made the state vulnerable to criticisms of Westernization, modernization and moral decay.

In response to such modern developments, religious leaders can talk about the moral and ethical failings as a way to assert their own religious doctrine. In a more fundamentalist sense, this can also morally sanction the use of violence. As Jurgensmeyer (2000: 383–4), has noted, in the absence of government approval, religion provides a meta-morality which can disregard regular moral restrictions on the dehumanizing of others and even killing. In this sense religion can provide the basis for a new national consciousness and may even be able to provide a new political leadership. At times of structural marginalization, real or perceived discrimination or other forms of exclusionary practices, the use of violence in the name of religion can seem enormously empowering.

In other words, religion, like the nation, is not 'just there' in any objective sense of the term but must be rediscovered, reinvented and reconceptualized every time it is called upon as an answer to ontological insecurity. The major world religions may have fixed texts, 'but they do not have fixed beliefs, only fixed interpretations of those beliefs' (Thomas 1999: 37). The more essentialist

such interpretations can become in establishing links between past historic events, such as the historic significance of a place or a building, the more successful they will be in terms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness – in creating boundaries between self and other.[9] Many such places (churches, temples, mosques, gurdwaras, shrines, synagogues, etc.), constitute controversial and contested sites and are often the sites of competing narratives and historical 'facts'. They are parts of the Chosen Trauma (or Chosen Glory) that define self and other in historical terms. As Peter van der Veer (1996: 11) has argued:

> (a) journey to one of these centers is a discovery of one's identity in relation to the other world and to the community of believers – a ritual construction of self that not only integrates the believers but also places a symbolic boundary between them and "outsiders".

The power of 'traditional community' hence lies in its ability to provide a unified story in terms of Chosen Traumas or Chosen Glories – the nation how it used to be as defined in absolute religious terms and 'verified' through religious and historical textbooks.

Connecting nationalism and religion to hegemonic perceptions of race and gender

To fully conceptualize the power of such 'traditional communities', it is important to be aware of how race and gender are at the heart of identity construction in relation to nationalist and religious discourse. If the process of 'othering' is viewed as being a fundamental part of nation-building and institutionalized religion, it is important to give due attention to hierarchical race and gender structures, as these constitute entrenched parts of the way meaning is ordered through social relations in society. As Kaminsky (1994) has noted, both gender and race are categories hard to shake loose from beliefs about the constraints of biology. The essentialist idea of the nation as constituting a relation between being and place hinges, for instance, on the essentialization of being in terms of clear distinctive definitions of who inhabits the national territory, who are 'sons of the soil' and who are not. Racism, as Etienne Balibar (1991: 37–38) has argued, is a historical phenomenon that emerges within the discourse of nationalism. Like nationalism, racism is based on separateness and the need for greater exclusivity.

Gender, race and nationalist discourses

As discussed in previous chapters, such racism is often disguised in political discourse as being simply a matter of religious and/or cultural differences. Differences between 'them' and 'us', and the threat 'they' constitute, are posed in terms of cultural-religious characteristics found to be incompatible with 'our' culture/nation. The recent tendency to link the religion of Islam with terrorist practices is a good example of how different groups become homogenized in religious

terms which reflect racist practices. Not only are nationalist and religious procedures intimately connected with race, however, also gender is at the root of much of this debate.

The search for a proper 'national character' is almost exclusively race *and* gender based, concentrating upon the male body and sharpening gender differences as a result. Of particular interest is how national stereotypes, such as the 'clean-cut Englishman' or the 'all-American boy', have almost always been related to protection of the nation. The national stereotype represents those who protect the inside from outside aggressors at the same time as it separates out those who look 'different', making looks and appearance a major differentiation (see Mosse 1995: 168). Singling out men with Muslim names, clothing or other physical appearances for particular scrutiny at international airports reflects, for example, both a gendered and race-motivated nationalist stereotype. The assumption is, of course, that people inhabit only one nation and only one religion, that they are members of only one race, one gender and one sexual orientation; that they, as Calhoun has phrased it (1997: 18), 'live in only one world at a time'.

This idea of the nation as providing an inside is closely connected to the idea of the family. It is associated with home, the place where the door will always be open for you, where a fire will be lit upon arrival and where you will receive the 'warmth of your mother's care'. Essentialist views of women, men, femininity and masculinity are at the basis of such family metaphors and have served to institutionalize women's as well as minorities' inferiority. As Balibar (1991: 37) has pointed out, images of gender, race and nation are never far apart and family metaphors have served to assign others to the ranks of second-class citizens.

Using the family metaphor, women have been construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation in a similar way to how women traditionally have been seen as the anchors of the family. However, like in the images of the male as the head of the family, females have been denied any direct relation to national agency. This representation of the universal subject as both the creator and the object of knowledge (in both secular and religious terms), is a gendered and racist representation that most political theorists (and theologists) have attributed to (Western) men rather than to women or minorities (see Tickner 1996, Hall 1997b, Mojab 2001). Within this process women and minorities have increasingly been portrayed as objects separating the Western male's capacity for reasoning from women's and minorities affective bodies (see Grant and Newland 1991, Yuval-Davis 1997).

Within this process a differentiation has been made between the protector and the protected, between the world outside the family (the public) and within the family (the private), and between the international anarchic environment and the safe domestic environment. In all cases the former is associated with the male sphere while the latter is connected to the female sphere. Mother nature or descriptions of 'nation-states' (Britain, France, India, etc.) as she or her reflects this tendency. States act in the anarchic environment to protect the nation. The socially constructed ideal of masculinity shapes the definition of the international system, of authority, sovereignty, security, development, and of power (see Grant and Newland 1991, Sylvester 2002, Yuval-Davis 1997).

Femininity, in comparison, is often conceptualized as either the opposite of masculinity (the rational male vs. the emotional female), as its inferior (strong male needed to protect its weaker female counterpart), or as its straightforward equal (since man equals women there is little need to look at gender). The fallacies of always defining one in relation to the other emerge in the overgeneralizations that what is male cannot be female, what is male is inherently superior to its female counterpart and what is male is rightfully the standard of what female should be (Tavris 1992: 27–30). Within this process of overgeneralizations, women's *and minorities'* identities have been constructed around a lack of independence and autonomy; a lack of subjectivity in the modernist sense of the word. This lack of subjectivity has caused women's and minorities' subordination to appear natural, as primordial as consciousness itself (Beauvoir 1952, in Tickner 1996, Yuval-Davis 1997), while in reality it reflects racist and gendered patterns of social relations.

The tendency, for instance, by US legislators during the Cold War to describe Latin Americans as weak, effeminate and as incapable of making rational decisions, has a racist bias at the same time as it mirrors this inability to see them as subjects (see e.g. Cottam 1994). The racist component can be found in the tendency to 'degrade' people who are see seen as 'non-whites'. This means that race becomes a constructed category used to order different people hierarchically where the constructed 'white race' is favoured among different others. A gendered discourse becomes instrumental in this process. Similarly, much queer literature and literature on masculinity (see e.g. Hearn 1992, Popay *et al.* 1998) have shown how, in particular, gay men are often given effeminate traits in public discourse. They are commonly viewed as weak, as lacking clear goals and strategies, and tend to be caricatured in a demeaning manner as lesser human beings. Such lack of agency is also evident in the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. As noted by Todorov (1982: 35–8) in relation to the Indians of South America, the propensity to associate Indians with nature (the noble savage), thus denying them a possibility of having a will of their own, is similar to the common association of women with nature. Like the colonies, women need to be conquered, tamed and cared for.

This notion of 'caring' is most recently illustrated through the hijacking of feminist terminology by the American president who bombed Afghanistan to free the 'women of cover' and who then took on the cause of the Iraqi women (Viner 2002). Considering that the same president on the first day in office cut funding to any international family-planning organization which offers abortion services or counseling, it is difficult to see these actions as anything other than a theft of feminist rhetoric for other purposes.

However, as postcolonial feminists have pointed out, these tendencies are also at the core of the colonized response to the colonizers. As noted by Chatterjee in his writings on India and women, the family metaphor is at the heart of the nationalists' struggle against the British Empire:

> Applying the inner/outer distinction to the matter of concrete day-to-day living separates the social space into ghar and bahir, the home and the world.

> The world is the external, the domain of the material; the home represents one's inner spiritual self, one's true identity. The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world – and woman is its representation.
>
> (Chatterjee 1993: 120)

It is thus interesting to note how much of the literature on women in the nineteenth century India and especially Bengal, was concerned with the threatening Westernization of Bengali women. To ridicule the idea of a Bengali woman trying to imitate the ways of a memsaheb was a clear recipe to evoke boisterous laughter and moral condemnation in both male and female audiences (Chatterjee 1993: 122).

Like the nation women must, in other words, remain pure and free from outside domination. The state thus produces masculine heroes and 'protectors' who fight for the defence of the 'mother' country. Women are sacred objects that have to be protected against outsiders, a protection offered by husbands and male relatives in the case of the family and by the state at the level of the nation. This is particularly visible in the use of rape in conflicts and in war, where rape serves both as a signifier of the 'other' (the woman) as a non-subject and as a signifier of the other side as 'powerless' as they (the weak males) have failed to protect their women. Such use of sexualized metaphors is both gendered and racialized as the other – the weak males – are regarded as inferior beings. As Castles and Davidson (2000; see also Mojab 2001) have noted, the control of female sexuality and reproduction is crucial to nationalism. This is what Yuval-Davies (1997) refers to as the 'burden of representation' – the fact that women come to represent national unity and distinctiveness.

Gender, race and religious discourses

In those instances when nationalism relies upon an identification of a particular religion, women often carry a double burden of representation – both as depictions of national unity and as bearers of religious tradition. In countries where the nationalist discourse is predominantly Islamic, for instance, official feminist discourse has basically two choices – either it can deny that Islamic practices are necessarily oppressive or it can assert that oppressive practices are not necessarily Islamic. The first strategy is often framed in response to the commodification of the sexually exploited Western women and involves a demonization process of the other. The second strategy basically refers to some kind of mythical belief in an uncorrupted original Islam that gives no justification for current discriminatory gender practices. In both cases, however, they share the same nationalist discursive space – a space reproduced by men and women alike. Changing the terms of this discourse is expensive as it is likely to serve as a source of alienation from the shared meanings of language, identity, affiliation and loyalty (Kandiyoty 1993, Mojab 2001). For women such a challenge is often particu-

larly expensive as it tends to entail a challenge against the patriarchal underpinnings of the nation.

This example serves as a good illustration of the close interaction between nationalist and religious discourse. Similar to nationalist discourse, family metaphors are crucial to much religious discourse. This is commonly expressed as a matter of controlling the body, especially sexual control. As noted by Beyer (1994) and Bayes and Tohidi (2001) in regard to Christian and Islamic fundamentalists, the family is portrayed as the core social institution and women serve as the maintainers of religion and tradition. Women come to represent the timelessness quality of status quo, of tradition, in the name of religion. Examples range from the extreme of the Talibans, to more modest family values-oriented discourse among religious believers in Western and non-Western societies. It is within this process that gender becomes a contestable domain as 'woman as the other' emerges within the discourses of various politics of recognition. 'Woman as other' is likely to reflect the need to reassert control in times of uncertainty.

The pre-occupation with religion and culture among many groups who experience ontological insecurity is thus intimately linked with social reproduction to prevent the decline or death of *one's* religious and cultural heritage among the next generation. For many migrants or structurally marginalized minorities it is also a way to regain control in a place where many males feel structurally inferior at the same time as they lack the unquestioned authority of their home societies or the majority. This implies that gender relations often come to constitute the 'essence' of religion and cultures as ways of life to be passed from generation to generation (Yuval-Davis 1997). In the case of migrants or minority groups this may involve defining the kinds of behaviour they find unacceptable in the host society or among the majority population. For members of the majority group it often means locating certain unacceptable traits or characteristics among the minority group(s). In both cases it is likely to be framed as a reaction against forces of globalization and modernity.

As many postcolonial feminist authors have pointed out (see e.g. Sunder Rajan 1993, Kandiyoti 1993), it is much easier to make an idea powerful if it can be framed in the discourse of 'anti-Western' as that allows for the glorification (and unification) of the 'pre-colonial' or homeland culture and religion. 'Women in their 'proper' behavior, their 'proper' clothing, embody the line which signifies the collectivity's boundaries' (Yuval-Davis 1997). As Fatima Mernissi and Karen Browne have noted:

> In groups led by men whose identity is constructed in important ways by their confrontation with an external 'other', great weight falls on the need to control the other 'others' (women) in their midst.
>
> (cited in Bayes and Tohidi 2001: 39)

These men constitute what I refer to as 'hegemonic traditionalists', who take it upon themselves to define and interpret 'proper' behaviour as a way to assert their

authority over the community. Various venues, such as schools or religious buildings, often become places for hegemonic traditionalists and their followers to reinterpret the collectivity's boundaries and assert control over 'their' 'women and children' (to use Cynthia Enloe's (1993) terminology which implies the treatment of women as children). Here I use the term 'traditionalists' in a similar way to how Bayes and Tohidi (2001: 37) refer to fundamentalists as the new religio-political movements that pose themselves, in one way or another, as political as well as ideological and socio-cultural alternatives to secular modern states and discourses. What these traditionalists choose as being important parts of the past is both highly selective and male-centered. As Bayes and Tohidi (2001) have noted in regard to various fundamentalist groups, certain patterns of conservative and regressive gender ideologies seem to be similar, despite striking differences in aims and goals. Hence control of women, sex segregation (physically or conceptually), and the use of physical and spatial means to obscure feminine sexuality are often part of a traditionalist religious discourse.

This notion of 'hegemonic traditionalists' also alludes to the problems involved in the politics of group-based multiculturalism, which has as its goal the protection of cultural and often religious rights. Most notable here is how cultural and religious diversity is set against the equal treatment of all women in opposition to multiculturalism and secularism. This assumes that the various minority groups are viewed as monolithic and self-contained communities whose interests are represented by hegemonic traditionalists, thus entirely disregarding the lived experiences of many community members, especially women. The re-imagination of Western ideas of unity and unification is thus an important resource for those members of society who are powerful and conservative. By viewing the group as a unified agent, rights are 'bestowed on "the group" as a means to preserve "its" tradition and defend "its" interests of "the" group' (Tamir 1999: 47).

What is particularly interesting in this process is how those interests and traditions are described in terms of authentic, unique, real and even natural as if there was an absolute 'good' body of knowledge found in *the* minority culture. In line with anarchic ideas of the world system, survival becomes of ultimate importance. The emphasis on survival nurtures the belief that changes in cultural norms or violation of values endanger 'the' culture's existence and should therefore be rejected. This tendency to portray change as something dangerous reflects a great deal of paternalism. The claim that, in order to retain their identity minority communities must preserve their traditional laws, presupposes that, while the majority population can change, the minority cannot (Tamir 1999; see also Okin 1999). The minority becomes the exotic (but still inferior) other. A return to religious traditional values must thus be seen in relation to the experience of marginalization and racism among many minority groups, where the inside, the private, is to be protected from the hegemonic masculine outside. As one Muslim youth in Bradford, United Kingdom, expressed it during the riots in 1995:

> It's not about prostitution or unemployment or about all that nonsense of the Chief Constable. It's about the way two police officers treated one of our women.
>
> (*The Guardian*, June 18, 1995,. cf. Yuval-Davis 1997: 45)

This quote points to how structural inequalities in patriarchal societies may affect minority communities. The tendency to romanticize culture and religion has thus been at the heart of the attempt to suppress the colonial subject in the past and has continued to work as a means to prevent structural equality and integration in many Western multicultural societies. In this sense it has served to dislocate the migrant subject by suppressing those subjects unable to be subjects in their own rights, but merely subjects through the politicization by others. Spivak's (1993) influential seminal piece on whether the 'subaltern can speak' is an excellent example of how history can be retold (reimagined) if voice is given to those previously silenced. However, it is not only among Western societies that religious hegemonic interpretations work to silence marginalized voices. Feminist analyses have shown how different types of masculinity are connected to current power structures in society. To speak of a hegemonic or dominating masculinity it is not enough to locate this in a cultural context, but it also needs to be set in an institutional power structure. Hence hegemonic masculinity is most likely to be expressed in powerful institutions, such as the government, the religious leadership, the military, and so on (Svedberg and Kronsell 2003). In religious terms, the struggle between various versions of hegemonic masculinity is often played out in the relationship between the secular state and religion. Within this encounter, racism and gender become interlinked.

In India, for instance, Muslim women – one of the most marginalized groups in the current state structure – provide a tragic illustration of how women and their bodies have become pawns in the struggle between the secular state and religion. There are nearly sixty million Muslim women in India, representing one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. Despite these numbers Muslim women remain largely absent and silent in the world of politics as well as in the professions, bureaucracy, universities and public and private sectors. At the same time they probably constitute the most politicized group in the Indian context. Not as women in their own rights, however, but by being subsumed and then made visible in the debate about minority rights versus minority appeasement, personal law versus uniform laws, secularism versus communalism and modernity versus communitarian traditions. The government, as Hasan (2000: 271–80) notes, has thus succeeded in constructing an identity where Muslim women's rights have been secondary to religious rights.

In this context Muslim women constitute both a racialized and gendered category in religious discourse. Different versions of masculinity thus exist among marginalized groups and these are often framed in opposition to a hegemonic version of masculinity. This is similar to how racial others are often categorized in relation to whiteness, where white is the norm and everything else is 'race'. The

current anti-Muslim sentiments in many societies that have emerged under the guise of the 'war on terrorism' reflect this tendency to make Islam, and especially Muslim men, into normative deviants. This is especially obvious in the wake of Bush's 'You are either with us or against us' rhetoric. As noted by Kundnani (2002), Hindu nationalists can now argue that their own Islamophobia has been vindicated at the same time as Muslims are finding that somehow they are responsible for the September 11 attack.

Muslim masculinity in India is thus framed in opposition to that of the morally righteous masculinity of the West and that of the tolerant masculinity of the Hindus.[10] However, it should be noted that most accounts of masculinity have in common some version of male dominance. As Bourdieu (1999) has pointed out, characteristic of male dominance is the fact that what is considered male is considered universally applicable, rather than merely constituting a particular condition. At the same time it must be emphasized that some versions of maleness, or hegemonic masculinity, is portrayed as superior to others where minorities (and non-Western others in a Western context) are often measured against this hegemonic version. Hence, a gendered *and racialized* order is created through everyday practices. These tend to reflect current power relations in society, where a certain type of masculinity has preference over other types of masculinities or femininities.

Such hegemonic masculinity is likely to be portrayed as normal and even natural and becomes an entrenched part of what is considered a community's particular culture, tradition or religion. To make this discourse heard requires a deconstruction of those asymmetric relationships that makes the traditional structure of the discourse possible, globally as well as locally. In order to do this we must question some major assumptions inherent in both religion and culture and especially the notion that those who profess change and transformation in the religious and cultural domains are betrayers. As Tamir (1999) and Okin (1999) have noted, (among others), these cultural patterns are particularly damaging for women, who can improve their status only by challenging traditional norms.

Nationalism and religion as powerful responses to the search for ontological security

Gender and race are thus at the heart of identity construction in relation to nationalist and religious discourse. The fact that racism is a historical phenomenon in the constitution of religious nationalism makes it a core feature for constructing the abject-other. Both biological and cultural racism involve the stigmatization of otherness as manifest in practices of elimination, violence, intolerance, humiliation and discrimination. The enemy-other must necessarily be debased and dehumanized, as it is only by making it into an abject that hate can be sustained and Chosen Traumas created. In order to do this, however, gender becomes as central as racism. By conceptualizing the 'other' as weak, effeminate and devoid of rational decision-making, nationalism and religion help in degrading the other and in taking away its status as a subject. This process of othering becomes a way to securitize subjectivity at times of rapid change.

Hence, nationalism and religion both provide the idea of a 'home', a place where subjectivity can be anchored and securitized, giving protection and safety from the stranger, the abject-other. The strength of nationalism and religion as powerful identity-signifiers lie in their abilities to convey unity, security and inclusiveness in times of crisis. They are, in other words, able to disguise process from product. The idea of the individual self in both nationalist and religious discourse promotes the belief that human interaction with a particular environment or a specific higher order generates 'natural' entities over time – entities referred to as nations or religions and seen as integral and unproblematic aggregations. As historical entities they are based upon the illusion that they have an origin, a verifiable history, which can be unfolded through empiricist fact-finding processes. As a result, they are able to provide explanations for the present and guidance for future actions.

Nationalism and religion, compared to other identity constructions, thus involve a shift from the personal level to a more abstract (imagined) level in their desire to go beyond the feeling of being more at home in one place than another (see Calhoun 1997). In this they extend further than the values and traditions of childhood formation, as they both change the focus from that of a subset of humanity to that of the whole. By supplying essentialized notions of cultural attributes based on totality and 'truth', they are able to reinforce racist and gendered enemy-images and constructions of others against whom a self can be defined and united. The prominence of religion and nationalism may thus engender the growth of new (depicted as old) local identities as people search to securitize subjectivity in response to the destabilizing effects of globalization.

It is at such times of 'homelessness' and alienation that leaders may emerge to channel existential fears of loss and despair. The emergence of the postmodern era thus encourages resistance and rejections of traditional power structures. However, rather than seeing such leaders as purely instrumental manipulators (which is common in much writings on modernity, nationalism and religion), they should be viewed as socially constructed in relation to the group. As such, they may select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group and to differentiate themselves from other groups. In this process, those leaders who succeed in addressing both the deeply felt (perceived as essential) attachments of group members and the shifting relationships of politics, have an advantage (Brass 1991, 2003).

To conceptualize religious and national identity construction in relation to global change thus requires us to attend to these deeply felt attachments (the psychological underpinnings of self and other), at the same time as we must address the structural incentives, constraints and changes that inform and shape political society. In the second part of this book I will look at the consequences of these arguments for understanding Sikh and Hindu nationalism in India and abroad. Proceeding from a thick signifier approach, the empirical chapters attempt to comprehend how globalization has affected security perceptions among Sikhs and Hindus; how members of these groups have become engaged in security building as a result of globalization – the securitization of subjectivity – and how

notions of self and other have changed in this process. The main aim is to grasp the extent to which Sikh and Hindu nationalism have been able to provide, or not provide, new secure identities in the light of global change.

Chapter four provides relevant background information for understanding Sikh and Hindu nationalism in a global context. It starts by locating India and research on India in such a context, followed by a brief overview of the material used and certain limitations of the empirical study. It then proceeds to situate Sikh and Hindu nationalism by discussing what led up to two major events that came to shape Sikh and Hindu identity construction and identity mobilization: the attack on the Golden Temple and the destruction of the Babri Mosque. This involves an initial discussion of how these events affected the essentialization of self and other and the extent to which Sikhs and Hindus have been preoccupied with the securitization of subjectivity in relation to these events. As such, this chapter points to the possible competition among many prominent identities and the struggle for trump card salience for one identity at the expense of others. It should be noted, however, that chapter four predominantly provides background to the analysis carried out in chapters five and six, both of which are focused on the relationship between processes of globalization, (in)security, identity conflict and Sikh and Hindu nationalism.

In chapters five and six I thus turn to an analysis of how globalization has affected the search for security among Sikhs and Hindus. To explore how security works as a thick signifier I address not only the structural conditions of securitizing subjectivity, but also the emotional aspects of hatred, debasement and the search for Chosen Traumas as related to issues of mobilization and manipulation of Sikh and Hindu identity. This also includes a discussion of Sikh and Hindu diasporas and how these diasporas' ties to host and home societies have affected identity constructions at home and abroad. The aim of these two analytical chapters is to realize how, and why, the search for security – the securitization of subjectivity – has differed in the two cases in response to globalization. In particular the chapters compare why Sikh nationalists have been less successful in mobilizing on the basis of religion than has been the case with Hindu nationalists.

Finally, in chapter seven I discuss how globalization, apart from being instrumental in bringing about ontological insecurity, also opens up and problematizes the use of essentialist categories. Processes of globalization are, in the long run, likely to question essentialist labels and categories as they expose asymmetries in power and knowledge by uncovering hegemonic history writing. On the terrain of Indian society I show how both the Sikh and the Hindu-Muslim cases have witnessed new cultures of resistance by people or groups who refuse incorporation into the hegemonic religious and nationalist cultures. Here I also discuss some recent developments in Indian politics and explore certain possible reasons for why the Congress Party was able to regain political power and surprise a whole world of election predictors.

Before proceeding to the final part of this book, it is necessary to once again note how difficult it is to escape from talking about 'Hindus', 'Muslims' and 'Sikhs' as if they were homogeneous groups. However, bearing in mind the sec-

tion on 'social self' and the problem of aggregation, I hope to have sufficiently conveyed how such categories are always imagined, fragmented and non-unitary – that they reflect identity as a process of becoming. But they also rely on the idea of subjectivity as, without human relatedness, groups would prove meaningless. The psychological dimension of identity and group conflict is fundamental to this line of reasoning. Hence, as categories, they remain expressions of how social relations are structured on the basis of power, where certain categorical groups have become marginalized in the process. In this sense they are social and unique at the same time and, in their attempts to securitize subjectivity, they are also likely to become preoccupied with the hardening of identity boundaries. This is all related to security understood as a thick signifier.

Part III

Religion and nationalism in India

4 Situating Sikh and Hindu nationalism in India

Indian politics has long been the focus of scholars interested in development research, peace studies and the sociology of identity. Unfortunately, much of this literature has remained unread in Asian studies departments in the West, as well as in political science and international relations departments. The tendency to study East or Southeast Asia rather than South Asia has long dominated Western research, especially in the United States. The reasons for this are largely to be found in a combination of geo-political and economic factors. Post-war development in Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea has certainly reflected a close geo-political interest in the Pacific region. The 'China-card', together with the real or imagined lucrative Chinese market, has further played a motivating role for Western interests in East Asia in general and for the US focus in particular. To this should be added the immigration patterns to the United States which have accounted for a greater number of people from East Asia than from South Asia making studies into this area of particular interest (Global Data Center: Migration Information Source). Also, while the East and Southeast Asian countries are on the verge of conquering and to some extent eliminating poverty from their societies, South Asia continues to remain a symbol of poverty and underdevelopment. The fall of the Soviet Union and the rapid changes in the Soviet successor states have furthermore produced a lot of research on democratization and the emergence of civil society in Eastern Europe and East and Southeast Asia, while similar processes have received less attention in South and Central Asia.

These factors have obviously had consequences for the specific kind of research being carried out in these respective areas, theoretically as well as empirically. Theoretically, the literature on South Asia has often been more concerned with issues of development, postcolonialism, identity and identity conflicts, while literature on Southeast Asia and even more so on East Asia has tended to be more broadly preoccupied with economic, political and institutional explanations of current developments in these societies. In the former case, it has resulted in a critical theoretical climate where poststructural, postmodern and postcolonial literature, together with some general Marxist accounts, have come to, if not dominate, then at least inform the kind of theoretical debate taking place. There is, of course, research being done on East and Southeast Asia that takes a similar turn, but it is difficult not to be struck by the proliferation of critical theoretical work

originating from South Asia itself, and particularly from India, as compared to other Asian regions. This in itself has empirical explanations found in the particular Indian context.

Thus, one should not forget that India has remained an institutional democracy since 1947, despite its shortcomings, with a thriving, and often critical, academic and mass media climate. To this should be added the predominant belief among large sectors of the population that democracy does make a difference.[1] The genuine wish for change and development for the millions of poor people living in India has had real political and theoretical impact on the kind of research being conducted. As a result, it is important that, not only South Asia as a region becomes the focus of contemporary analysis, but also that South Asian scholars and research are rightfully acknowledged, especially as a great deal of this literature is indigenously produced and fails to reach a broader academic audience.

The first empirical chapter, chapter four, should be viewed as a background study to the analytical chapters that follow and no primary material is included in this chapter. It should be emphasized, however, that I do not give a full historical account of either Sikh or Hindu nationalism. The following two chapters, chapters five and six, are informed by primary material. Most of this material was collected in 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2002 when I conducted almost sixty taped (when permitted) semi-structured interviews in northern India. An interpreter was used for most of the interviews. Half of the interviews took place in Punjab where I interviewed mostly Sikhs, but also some Hindus, in the cities and countryside of Amritsar and Patiala. The rest of the interviews were held in Rajasthan and Gujarat, together with Delhi and Bombay, and aimed at getting a picture of mainly Hindu identity constructions. The fact that most violent encounters between Hindus and Muslims have taken place in the North is one of the main reasons why I have limited the study to these northern states. This is also in line with my general argument that Hindus living in the North have been able to rely on Chosen Traumas of the past as they have interpreted the negative effects of globalization, while in other Indian states globalization has had more mixed effects.

Although interviews were also conducted with Muslims, it should be noted that the main focus of this book is on how Sikh and Hindu identity constructions have been affected by globalization. This does not imply that Muslims (and other communities) have remained unaffected by globalization, or that Muslim identity constructions are uninteresting. Rather, it has been a necessary delimitation to make due to space constraints and in order to focus the analysis. Most of the interviews were made with ‘ordinary’ people, both in cities and in the villages surrounding the cities. Often they were more of a conversation and dialogue than actual interviews. In this sense the stories told have affected the theoretical arguments to a much larger extent than is perhaps visible in the text. In addition I conducted a number of informal interviews with academics at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, at Jaipur University in Jaipur and at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

The attempt was to be representative in relation to religion, caste, class and gender. I was not entirely successful in this regard, however, as more interviews

were conducted with men than with women and, in the case of the village Sikhs, a higher proportion of interviews with Jat Sikhs than with other castes or classes. Still, I believe the material to be representative for the purpose of this book. Here it should be emphasized that the interview material is used mainly for illustration and for clarifying and supporting my theoretical and empirical arguments.

Locating India in a global context

India became one of the first British colonies to win independence and its leaders swore to make democracy work in a multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic region that had previously never been united. It was one of the great triumphs of Indian independence in 1947 that, despite partition and the horrendous acts that accompanied it, the people of India accepted secularism as a basic value, enshrined in the constitution. However, tension between different groups had increased already in the late 1950s, and since then the Indian society has been shaken by a number of communal riots.[2]

Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims intensified in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, the Sikhs in Punjab experienced an upsurge in violence and nationalist tendencies, and so did the Kashmiris in Jammu and Kashmir, the Nagas in Nagaland, the Assamese in Assam, the Gurkhas in West Bengal, the Tamils in Tamil Nadu, and the Andhras in Andhra Pradesh, for example. To this should be added the growing conflicts between 'higher' and 'lower' castes as political leaders have adopted 'reservation' policies that closely resemble affirmative action in the West, as a means to gain electoral support from the 'lower' castes that make up a significantly larger proportion of the population. 'Higher' castes have resisted such attempts and the result has often been violent conflict (for details on these conflicts, see Kohli 1990, Brass 1991, 2003, Dutt 1998).

Simultaneously, India has slowly proceeded towards a market economy. The government has carried out industrial delicensing, relaxed the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, begun reforming the tax system, eased export and import control and seen exports rise, all of which have reduced inflation. The World Bank has made funds available to facilitate the closure of unprofitable firms by offering welfare benefits and retraining programmes to unemployed workers and the IMF has continued to push for economic liberalization.[3] The fact that group conflict occurs in tandem with economic liberalization and processes of globalization makes India an excellent case for analyzing transformations of collective identities in the light of modernizing forces.

When writing about India, scholars often take their point of departure in the colonialization and decolonialization processes, the independence movement and/or the partition (the creation of Pakistan in 1947). Although I agree that an understanding of all these processes are fundamental for grasping current events in India, I have chosen to let the analysis proceed from some more recent events: the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab, on June 4, 1984, and the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, on December 6, 1992. The first event refers to the Indian government's attempts to curb Sikh ter-

rorism by taking control of the Golden Temple, while the second incident was the culmination of extreme Hindu nationalism aimed at the Muslim minority. There are several reasons for why these events are used to guide the study. One is quite obvious as the focus of the analysis is on explaining and understanding the differences between Sikh and Hindu nationalism as they occurred in the 1980s and the 1990s. Understanding what led up to these events provides us with sufficient background for analyzing the reasons why an increasing number of Sikhs and Hindus became preoccupied with the search for security. The second reason has to do with how these two incidents were parts of a chain of events that started off as symbols and symbolic values, only to be replaced by substance and substantial reactions.[4] As such, they represent a wider symbolic and ritual pattern that is important for conceptualizing how essentialized self and others are created and Chosen Traumas are produced. Third and finally, these events are important illustrations of how nationalism and religion can be combined in diverse ways, producing different outcomes despite a number of similarities.

Hence the following account will provide a background analysis to the events leading up to the attack of the Golden Temple (Operation Bluestar) and to the destruction of the Babri Mosque, discussing how these events were the culmination of historically constructed processes. Included here is a brief introductory account of the extent to which Sikh and Hindu nationalism have included a process of self-essentialization and Chosen Traumas in their emphasis on a separate state of *Khalistan* and a Hindu Rashtra (a Hindu nation).

The attack on the Golden Temple and the destruction of the Babri Mosque

The Golden Temple – historical background

Comparing the events leading up to the destruction of the Babri mosque to that of the attack on the Golden Temple, we find certain similarities in the ways the central government played a crucial role in how events developed. There were also a number of similar aspects with regard to how the Sikh community were led to believe that they were discriminated against in comparison to other societal groups, in this case the Hindus. However, we also find much dissimilarity in the way the conflict unfolded as discussed here and in the next chapters.

A number of explanations have been forwarded to account for the factors preceding the operation in Punjab and the violence that followed. One is to point to the long reputation among the Sikhs of militarism and martyrdom, and many have claimed that this particular heritage was one of the major reasons for Sikh separatists to fight for an independent state called *Khalistan*; ‘the land of the pure’. It has been argued that ‘the’ Sikh ‘mentality’ is that of a warrior’s – always prepared to fight and sacrifice for a higher cause.[5] Others claim that, although there may be a tradition of militarism in Sikh history, this had virtually nothing to do with the increase in militancy in the 1980s. Instead, the conflict in Punjab was basically the result of a political power game between the Congress Party

under Indira Gandhi and the predominantly Sikh party of the Akali Dal.[6] In the former case the blame has often been put on the Sikhs themselves. Explanations have ranged from the marriage between religion and politics in Sikhism, supposedly creating problems for democratic accommodation, to factionalism within the Akali party and from there to accusations that the Sikh community was bent on imposing its will on the Hindus. In the latter case, a number of explanations have focused on Indira Gandhi herself. She has either been portrayed as an indecisive leader who failed to negotiate a settlement with the Akali leadership before the actual storming of the temple, or as a Machiavellian chieftain who created a crisis as a means to win the next national election. In some other versions she has been viewed as a power-hungry ruler who repeatedly over-centralized the Indian polity and gave rise to a number of centre-state conflicts, including Punjab (see Kohli 1990: 353–4; see also Brass 1988: 169–213).

The emphasis on militarism and the valourization of death in battle, expressed in Sikh religious literature, is by no means insignificant, but the religious tradition of the Sikhs can never be the sole, or even the main explanation, for the violence that occurred in Punjab in the 1980s and the early 1990s. At the same time, however, I am not convinced that the power struggle between Indira Gandhi and the regional party of Akali Dal is sufficient to explain *the manner* in which Sikh identities came together into 'one' identity pattern, as described and dealt with by authorities and non-Sikhs. To understand the extent to which violence came to dominate the lives of both Sikhs and Hindus, not only in Punjab but also in Delhi and other major cities, we must examine the socio-psychological foundation of Sikh identities in the broader context of Indian politics, socio-economic change and globalization. It is important here to acknowledge, as it is when discussing Hindus and Muslims or any other group constellations, that Sikhs are divided along caste, class, gender, religious intensity and along the rural-urban dimension – making generalizations difficult.

Looking at the history of Sikhism, however, there are certain historical interpretations that need to be outlined in order to understand their impact on recent events. It is popularly said that Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the first guru of the Sikhs, received his call and declared his ministry at the beginning of the sixteenth century with these words of negation: 'There is no Hindu; and there is no Musalman' (Uberoi 1998: 26; see also Jeffrey 1994: 50–6). This view, Grewal (1994: 6) argues, is reflective of the atmosphere in sixteenth century Punjab, when religious discussions between Hindus and Muslims were not uncommon. During the first quarter of this century Guru Nanak is generally believed to have undertaken journeys inside and outside the Indian subcontinent, debating with the protagonists of nearly all systems of religious belief and practice in contemporary India. His followers came to believe that he had undertaken these journeys for 'the redemption of the world' and that the sole purpose of these trips was to 'deliver his message of salvation to all' (Grewal 1994: 6–8; see also Akbar 1985: 108–9). The followers of Guru Nanak came to be known as Sikhs, from the Sanskrit *shishya* or disciple. Before proceeding any further it should be noted that this is but one interpretation of Sikh history and the formation of Sikh identity. As

discussed in chapter five, there are several interpretations of Sikh identity and Sikh history.

The official version of Sikhism and Sikh identity has, however, developed along two historical axes. The first is spiritual and is said to begin with the founding of the Sikh faith by Guru Nanak and his nine successors. As a religious pillar, it was based on the founders' teachings and the establishment of congregations (*Sangats*), by their setting up of sacred points such as Govindwal and Amritsar, and by the fifth Guru's, Guru Arjan, compilation of the sacred scripture of the community, the *Granth Sahib*. But it was not until the tenth and last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) that a confessional identity was established. He abolished the institution of the Gurus and vested power and responsibility for the protection of the community in the *Khalsa*, the Sikh brotherhood. It was a step towards militarization by a group of Sikhs, who vowed full commitment to the faith by being willing to sacrifice themselves for the Guru. The new members of the *Khalsa* were enjoined to wear five 'articles of faith', which would define them as *Khalsa* Sikhs. The articles were: *kesh*, unshorn hair; *kanga*, comb; *kaccha*, breeches; *kara,* steel wristband; and *kirpan*, sword. This codification of Sikh beliefs in the glorification of sacrifice and martyrdom, together with the tradition of *Miri-Piri* (the identity of the religious and temporal), was the distinct contribution of the last Guru (see Chadda 1997: 52, Grewal 1994: 6–8, Mahmood 1996: 14).

The second axis of Sikhism was temporal and was provided by the founding of the Sikh kingdom in 1801 by Maharajah Ranjit Singh. The Maharajah abolished the *Misl* system (a confederacy of twelve mutually warring petty Sikh kingdoms) and established the first unified territorial states of the Sikhs. It is the combination of this temporal and spiritual development that has served as a historical legitimator for potential and real confrontations with the Indian state. The rule of the orthodox Sikh brotherhood, the *Raj Karegha Khalsa*, has been interpreted either as a reference to the spiritual triumph of the religious beliefs as manifest in Sikhism, or in temporal and territorial terms as representing the establishment of a separate Sikh state (Chadda 1997: 52–3; see also Grewal 1994: 99–127, Jeffrey 1994: 59–60). This ambiguity has provided Sikh leaders with both a historical and a mythological tool to be used in various ways depending on context, but it has also created confusion as to the relationship between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab.

Before getting into the details of this confusion, it is necessary to give some further historical background to Punjabi politics involving the growth of the Sikh-dominated party of the Akali Dal (the army of the faithful). Electoral politics were introduced into India under the British, who also introduced a division of the electorate along religious lines. The formation of the Akali Dal is no exception in this regard. The Akali party emerged in 1921 out of the movement for ousting the *mahants* who controlled the *gurdwaras* (place of worship – Sikh temples), as they were accused of having abandoned the outward symbols of *Khalsa* identity. The formation of the party thus came as a result of a growing demand among Sikhs, who had kept the beard and turban that gurdwaras should be controlled by gen-

uine Sikhs, not shaven Hindus. The party was also formed as a central organization in response to the establishment of a committee to draft new rules for the management of the Golden Temple in November 1920. This committee became the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee* (SGPC) (Jeffrey 1994: 64–6, Singh 1983: 63–76). The SGPC was institutionalized by the British as they, at this time, became increasingly desperate in their suppression of the Gandhian non-cooperation movement throughout India and were afraid of losing the 'loyal' Sikhs.[7]

Despite the creation of the SGPC and the Akali Dal, the Akalis remained within the Congress Party's fold for most of the 1920s and 1930s and the main focus of communal propaganda was not on the Hindu-Sikh cleavage but on the Hindu-Muslim divide. In this divide Sikh communalists largely sided with Hindu communalists. The partition changed this pattern. With the Hindu-Muslim divide no longer available for ruling-class politicians, they turned swiftly to exacerbating the Hindu-Sikh divide. Although most Punjabis speak Punjabi, the Arya Samajis, the Jan Sanghis, and most of all, the Congress, campaigned among Hindus that they should record their mother tongue as Hindi in the 1951 census. Correspondingly, Sikh communalists, including the Akali Dal, were propagating that Punjabi was the language of Sikhs. The call for a *Punjabi Suba* (a Punjabi speaking state) became a reality in 1966 as the Punjab Reorganization Act was passed in September, followed by the emergence of the present Punjab and Haryana states in November.[8] However, the Akalis soon stressed that the creation of a Punjabi Suba had not resulted in many genuine changes. It was demanded that Chandigarh should be included into Punjab; that some Punjabi speaking areas awarded to Haryana should also be included, and that Punjab should control the Bakra Dam project and the Beas Dam project.[9] As developed in chapter five, these developments cannot be understood apart from the emergence of the Green Revolution in 1966, referring to the introduction of a variety of high yielding produce and capital intensive agricultural technology.

As the Congress came back to power in the 1972 state elections, the Sikh leadership's hopes of being able to dominate the state of Punjabi speakers proved to be short-lived. The Akali Dal could control Punjab only if all Sikhs voted for them. Congress understood this and sought to split the Sikh vote, while the Akalis tried to unify their power base. In 1973, Congress tried to portray itself as a champion of the Sikh cause and to mobilize Sikhs along religious lines. The Akalis felt compelled to counter-mobilize and adopted the *Anandpur Sahib Resolution* in October the same year.[10] As a resolution it was almost exclusively centred on the separate interests of the Sikh community and gave the appearance of a movement for self-determined status for the community. However, the adoption of this document may have been only a temporary tactic in the struggle against Congress, as a different document was adopted once the Akali Dal was back in power again in 1978 (together with the Hindu-based Janata Party). The Akali Dal took advantage of the emergency politics of 1975–7 by protesting against Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism, partly as a matter of principle but mainly to mobilize public opinion (see Kohli 1990, Wallace 1989).

After 1980, following the loss of power in the secular political domain, the Akali Dal's leadership faced a formidable challenge to its capacity to skilfully manipulate the instruments of religion and identity for its secular objectives. In addition, the Congress party contributed to the Akali disarray by covertly supporting Sant Jarnal Singh Bhindranwale and the extremist movement that he led in Punjab, leading to the partial displacement of Akali authority among Sikhs.[11] Within this process, Bhindranwale turned against Congress and began to cultivate his own followers by appealing to religious revivalism and the need for greater political control over Sikh destiny. In an attempt to broaden its political power base and in fear of losing power, the Akali Dal responded by launching its own holy war (*dharm yudh* – literally 'righteous struggle') in 1982, combining economic demands (e.g. more irrigation water) with religious and political issues of greater autonomy for the Sikhs within India. By this time, however, militancy and terrorism had taken on a dynamic of their own and Bhindranwale's goal was now (at least implicitly) the creation of a sovereign state of *Khalistan*. The fact that the militants were met with repression only gave rise to further conflict throughout 1983–4. Under Bhindranwale's leadership many began to use gurdwaras as sanctuaries and the leaders eventually made the Golden Temple, which is the most important of Sikh gurdwaras, their base of operation. Hindus were killed by militants to put pressure on the Congress Party and Sikhs were killed to minimize dissent within the community. The final outcome was presidential rule and the assault on the Golden Temple; the 'Operation Bluestar' which killed Bhindranwale and his followers, and the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards followed by the massacres of Sikhs in Delhi.

The Babri Mosque – historical background

Understanding what happened in Ayodhya in December 1992 is difficult without grasping the larger issue of Hindu nationalism and the political mobilization of *Hindutva* (the movement for Hindu self-assertion and nationhood). Hindu nationalism experienced a boom in the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) being asked to form a minority government in 1998 and another one (albeit stronger) in 1999. Hindu nationalism is not a new phenomenon, however, but has long existed in various forms. It got its name as early as 1925 through the creation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS – the Association of National Volunteers),[12] but did not become influential until the struggle in 1947 to keep Kashmir under Indian rule.[13] The RSS later developed its political wing – the Jana Sangh (People's Society), which in 1977 became part of the Janata Party that came to power after Indira Gandhi's emergency rule. In 1980 the Jana Sangh group left the Janata Party and formed the Bharatiya Janata Party as the political arm of the RSS. The BJP has close ties with Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Council of Hindus), a non-governmental organization that was formed in 1964 to spread 'Hindu ethical spiritual values' and to establish links with Hindus in other countries.[14] VHP attained national

notoriety in the early 1980s when it organized an anti-Muslim campaign following the conversion of over 1000 Dalits or untouchables to Islam (see Kolodner 1995, Patnaik and Chalam 1998: 271). This organization successfully provoked the fear that all 300 million lower-caste citizens would follow suit, and that foreign influences where using 'Gulf money' to carry out these conversions and undermine the Hindu nation (Kolodner 1995). The 'family' of organizations created by the RSS is often referred to as the *Sangh Parivar* or just the *Sangh* (organization) or the *Parivar* (family).[15]

Hindu nationalism derives from socio-religious movements consisting of high caste Hindus, such as the Arya Samaj organization set up in 1875 in reaction against the British colonial state and Christian missions. Its main task was to maintain the basic elements of traditional social order and culture of the Hindus while adapting that tradition to certain aspects of Western society. The exclusive nationalism that developed and was instrumental for the creation of the RSS, was influenced by Western examples and is particularly apparent in the writings of V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar. Savarkar's work, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, published in 1923, is a basic text for nationalist 'Hinduness', and rests on the assumption that Hindus are vulnerable in comparison to 'pan-isms', such as pan-Islamism. He was influenced by the Italian Giuseppe Mazzini's political writings on Italian nationalism and linked Mazzini's studies of 'threatening others' to the study of ethnic nationalist movements in Europe.[16] Savarkar's main argument in *Hindutva* is that the Aryans who settled in India at the beginning of history constituted a nation now embodied in the Hindus. Their *Hindutva* rested on three pillars: geographical unity, racial features and a common culture.[17] The first contact between Hindu nationalists and European fascists took place in the 1930s and in 1938 Savarkar wrote approvingly of the occupation of the Sudeten land by Germany on the grounds that its inhabitants shared 'common blood and common language with the Germans' (Jaffrelot 1996: 51).

But it was Golwalkar, rather than Savarkar, who in 1939 gave the RSS the charter it had previously lacked. He did this in his book *We, or our nationhood defined*. In the book he contrasts India with the 'nation-states' of the world, arguing that India has never been uncivilized, while at the same time expressing an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Western countries. In comparison to how nationalism had been interpreted in India to account for territorial nationalism, the Western countries had been successful in fostering and cherishing a 'correct national consciousness', Golwalkar argued (Golwalkar 1939: 62, in Jaffrelot 1996: 52; see also Patnaik and Chalam 1998: 252–80). In this Golwalkar draws on a number of German writers, especially Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, who argued that a nation points to birth and race and that 'the essence of a people lies in its civilisation (Kultur)' (quoted in Jaffrelot 1996: 53), rather than in any voluntary social contracts. Bluntschli's writings (together with other similar writers) led Golwalkar to look at the case of India in the light of five criteria for understanding the nation: geographical unity, race, religion, culture and language. The racial factor was by far the most important, according to Golwalkar, and the Muslim minority posed the most severe threat by being a 'foreign body' lodged into the

Hindu society, thus undermining the Hindu nation (Jaffrelot 1996: 55; see also Bhatt and Mukta 2000, Chakravartty 1994: 161–80).

As can be seen from this brief outline, Hindu nationalism possesses relatively deep roots in India. But over the last decades the movement has taken a very different form. Never before could Hindu nationalists have been able to mobilize 300,000 Hindus to engage in religious activities as they did in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, in 1992.[18] The demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya had repercussions throughout India. The mosque itself, which originates from the 1500s, is believed to have been built on the Hindu god Rama's birthplace (between 900,000 to 5,000 years ago, depending on the priest consulted as Kolodner (1995) has noted) and Hindu nationalists have long argued that the mosque should be demolished and a Hindu temple built there instead. In many ways it has been a ticking bomb since independence, but tension increased during Rajiv Gandhi's rule for a number of reasons – as accounted for below.

Beginning in 1949, Hindu priests managed to smuggle an idol of Rama into the mosque. As a result and to avert further trouble the central government decided to keep the mosque locked to the public. But, in October 1984, at the height of Indira Gandhi's appeals to the 'Hindu' majority, the VHP instigated a campaign to 'liberate' the site of *Ramjanambhoomi*[19] in Ayodhya, which was allegedly occupied by the *Babri Masjid*. On February 1, 1986, a judge at the district court under whose jurisdiction Ayodhya fell, decided to affirm a VHP appeal that the site was indeed a temple and the site of the mythological god Rama's birthplace. This affirmation had significant consequences for the Muslim minority, which at this time comprised more than 10 per cent of the electorate in 207 parliamentary constituencies, and over 20 per cent in 81 constituencies (Bose 1997: 128, Chatterjee 1996: 92–3). To many Muslims it was viewed as further evidence of the 'secular' state abdicating its responsibility to protect the self-respect and collective identity of the Muslim community. The response from the regime was to concentrate on the protection of religious and identity rights of the Muslims. In many ways this reflects a continuous pattern of behaviour by successive Congress governments since 1947, as they have tended to ignore economic needs, urban ghettoization and rural poverty among the Muslims and have instead attended to the protection of religious rights. The state has been asked to protect religious groups in two ways: through the demands made by spokespersons of the Muslim community for the exemption of the Muslim religious minority from the (secular) Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) (that Muslim Personal Law based on *Sharia* should be pertaining in family matters), and through demands by the Hindu right for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

Some inherent problems with these laws can probably best be illustrated through the Shah Bano court case from 1986. This case goes back to the early eighties when a woman called Shah Bano filed for alimony under section 125 of the CrPC from her husband who had divorced her. The husband argued that alimony was not permissible under the *Sharia*, and the Supreme Court had to give its ruling on the question of whether the provisions of Section 125 of the CrPC were applicable to Muslims. The court decided that the provisions were indeed

applicable to Muslims. Following this judgment there were heated discussions within the Muslim community between 'progressive' and 'fundamentalist' Muslims, between women's groups and Muslim leaders as well as on the floor of parliament. This discussion must be seen in the light of the growing *Hindutva* movement, whose representatives argued that the Muslims were oppressing 'their' women and that the Muslim Personal Law was an oppressive and anti-national Law in comparison to the Hindu Code. This is where Rajiv Ghandi stepped in. In fear of losing the Muslim vote, he used his large majority to pass a special law in Parliament in 1986 (ironically named the Muslim Protection of Rights on Divorce Act) that made the *Sharia* superior to the country's civil code in matters pertaining to maintenance of divorced Muslim women (Bose 1997: 128–9; see also Freitag 1996: 224–5, Basu 1996: 63, Palriwala and Agnihotri 1996: 511–19, Das 1999: 449–55). This law basically deprived divorced Muslim women of the right to maintenance, a right they had long been struggling to achieve.

This episode had significant political consequences. More than anything it provided a propaganda tool for the growing *Hindutva* movement, which could now argue that the government was only pseudo-secular and actually pro-Muslim, appeasing minorities at the expense of the majority. This in itself served as a promotional device to accuse the regime of accommodating the Muslim enemy through legislation, while failing to respect the judicial verdict on Ayodhya. As a result the *Hindutva* movement found a receptive audience for its pro-Hindu 'nationalist' concerns, particularly in northern India. As such, it played an important role in the elections of 1989 and even Rajiv Gandhi insisted during a rally in Faizabad-Ayodhya that he supported the VHP cause. But the issue was made absolutely central by the Bharatiya Janata Party in close association with both the VHP and the RSS. In particular there were two major political developments in the early 1990s that affected the course of action regarding Ayodhya (see van der Veer 1996: 2–7).

First, the Kashmir issue flared up again, which resulted in unprecedented violence against the Hindu population, forcing many Hindus to leave that part of the country. As a result, the BJP took a strong anti-Pakistan stance on the Kashmir issue which had negative consequences for Hindu-Muslim relations in general. Second, the V.P. Singh government decided in September 1990 to implement an earlier report of the Mandal commission that suggested a considerable increase in the number of places reserved for the so-called backward castes in educational institutions and government service.[20] The Mandal decision resulted in widespread anti-reservation riots, involving a large number of students immolating themselves. These protests were considered a threat to the VHP/RSS/BJP agenda and, as a result, the leader of the BJP, Lal Kishnan Advani, decided to start a ritual procession, the *rath yatra*, that would pass through ten states on the way to Ayodhya, with the goal of constructing the new temple to *Rama* on October 30, 1990. Advani himself was dressed as *Rama*, with bow and arrow in hand and vermilion on his forehead and his initiative was met with great enthusiasm, although he was arrested before reaching the actual site.[21]

This ritual procession influenced the BJP electoral success in 1991.[22] And on December 6, 1992, a rally in Ayodhya, organized by the VHP and the BJP, resulted in an attack on the mosque and its subsequent demolition. As a result the Rao government decided to ban several Hindu organizations such as the RSS, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, but despite these measures the destruction of the mosque provoked intense communal violence, especially in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Surat and Calcutta. In some places the riots were closer to pogroms against the Muslims than to communal violence. In Bombay, for instance, such pogroms were led by the radical Hindu nationalist party Shiv Sena, and according to a number of reports, supported by the Bombay police force.[23] The destruction of the mosque and the ensuing violence also had international repercussions and were followed by riots in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as in Great Britain, with Muslims setting fire to Hindu temples in retaliation. The Ayodhya event was thus in many ways the culmination of the work of Hindu nationalist parties such as the BJP and Shiv Sena. The BJP at this time was enjoying unprecedented success for a Hindu nationalist party and had won 119 seats out of 545 in the lower house of parliament in 1991, as compared to two seats in 1984. And the BJP was not the only Hindu nationalist party to win elections. The radical Shiv Sena, for instance, won municipal elections in Bombay in 1985 and has since extended its political strength throughout other parts of the state of Maharasthtra.

Hindu and Sikh nationalism: the essentialization of self

Of interest then are the reasons why both Hindu and Sikh nationalism appeared to have experienced a boom in the 1980s and 1990s. In the Sikh case this became manifest in terrorist activities, while in the Hindu case it culminated in the BJP being asked to form a minority government in 1998. Neither of these events can be understood, however, unless we recognize the attempts made to essentialize Hindu and Sikh self-identity during these years. Starting with Hindu nationalism, it should be noted how it, from the beginning, was formed as a reaction against, and fear of, the expansion of two minority faiths, Christianity and Islam. The main concern was continuity and hegemony of Hindu identity.[24] The BJP's party programme emphasizes *Hindutva*, Hinduness (although this has been downplayed lately). The terminology of *Hindutva* was utilized by the Hindu nationalist leader V.D. Savarkar in the 1920s, as discussed earlier: 'A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat Varsha, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holy-Land that is the cradle of his religion' (quoted in van der Veer, 1996: 1; see also Panikkar 1997: xi). Religious and national identity is equated in the terminology of *Hindutva*, which implies that an Indian is a Hindu who belongs to the (imagined) *Hindu Rashtra* – the Hindu nation. As a consequence it puts other religious communities outside the nation, such as Sikhs, Christians and Muslims.[25]

The politics of *Hindutva* was played out in the destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992, as the VHP was instrumental in the homogenization of a 'national' Hinduism. By transforming the mosque in Ayodhya into a symbol of the 'threat-

ened' majority, the explosion of passionate feelings and violent actions came to be portrayed as 'natural' and crucial to the self-respect of the collectivity, as if it was an individual (van der Veer 1996). By supplying a homogenized version of Hindu self-identity, it was thus possible to essentialize cultural constructions and categories. There is, however, nothing 'natural' or essential in such constructions and it would indeed be difficult to specify a Hindu identity from a primordialist point of view. There is the Hindi language, but not all Hindus speak Hindi. There are philosophical traditions of Hinduism, but at the same time one can believe almost anything and still be considered a 'good' Hindu.[26] Some Hindus, especially in the North, have a common tradition of Mughul empire, but Hindus in the South were long ruled by small Hindu empires and dispersed Muslim Sultanates. Also, Muslim rule in the South took a very different form than it did in the North and may be better characterized as a business relationship than a power relationship. It was also in the North that the most violent encounters occurred between Hindus and Muslims as a result of the partition. Finally, it would be difficult from a primordialist perspective to explain the continuing historical conversion of Hindus to Sikhs and Muslims, among others.[27]

The Sikh phenomenon constitutes a similar case and any attempt to specify a Sikh primordial identity is bound to fail. There is the Punjabi language, but not all Sikhs speak Punjabi and neither is the Punjabi language limited to the Sikhs alone. There is the philosophical tradition of Sikhism, but it is clearly possible to be a Sikh without adhering to the Khalsa tradition. Also, as pointed out by Rajinder Kaur (1992: 109–10), any expressions of the philosophical tenets of Sikhism, which basically overlaps with Hinduism, were kept low-key throughout the conflict. To this should be added a historical, often intimate, relationship between Sikhs and Hindus, where Sikhs have commonly been referred to as the military arm of Hindus. Finally, as noted above, it would indeed be difficult to explain the continuous historical conversions of Hindus to Sikhism from a primordialist point of view. Actually to establish any monolithic identity is indeed problematic, as witnessed by the British attempts to do so in the late nineteenth century.

It was the British who came to classify and compare rates of literacy, population growth, professional occupations and recruitment to the army, for example, according to religious affiliation. Here they faced some serious difficulties regarding the definition of the label Sikh. To resolve the problem, it was decided in 1881 that any one describing themselves as Sikhs be listed as such. That, however, did not solve the problem as there were several populations calling themselves Sikhs who had variant conceptions of what that religious identity meant and who were to be included. Thus, in 1891 it was decided that only *Keshdharis*[28] were to be listed as Sikhs, thereby imposing a *Singh* or *Khalsa* identity on the Sikhs. This strict definition was abandoned in 1901, only to reappear in the 1911 Census when the British re-emphasized Sikhs as 'Singhs' (literally 'lion'), meaning a 'distinct people'. This included an attempt to successfully 'license' Sikhs' separateness, not only from the Hindus, but also from earlier conceptions of the Sikh. A set of particular rituals and symbols were chosen by the British to reinforce the 'martial instincts' of the Sikhs who were now considered a 'martial race'

in line with the biological determinism sanctioned by the mid-nineteenth century European view of racial divisions of mankind. The racial orientation facilitated large-scale recruitment of the Sikhs to the army and, as argued by Harish Puri (1989: 316), Punjab turned into an 'army barracks of *Pax Brittanica'*. This transformation of the term 'Sikh' from an external source of categorization to an internal symbol of solidarity and power also constitutes an interesting historical lesson in the construction of identities and the tactics of identity-based nation-building.[29]

Both these cases show the difficulty in establishing either a Hindu or Sikh collective self without the existence of an other, as the essentialization of self needs to be contrasted with that of the other – that which self is not. The acceptance and creation of a self thus requires establishing boundaries between self and the other, boundaries which serve to reify the other by moving the self from internal perception to material reality. As emphasized in chapter two, the other needs to become a walking, breathing, living embodiment of everything the self wishes to cast off. Constructing a sacred integrated self means demonizing a self-rejected other.

Categorizing the self – demonizing the other

The Sikh experience

In the case of the Sikhs, there was clearly an attempt made in that direction in Punjab following the partition in 1947. However, as will be noted in this brief outline of the years leading up to the attack on the Golden Temple, Sikh nationalists were largely unsuccessful in their attempts to demonize an other. This is particularly evident when comparing the results to that of Hindu nationalists. Still, there were efforts made to construct a specific other during the sixties and seventies. The call for a Punjabi Suba was, it was argued, necessary for saving the Sikhs from the 'slavery of the Hindus' (Puri 1989; see also Pal Dang 1983, Puri 1986). Political aims and religion were conveniently intertwined in images of 'them' (the Hindus) as conquerors, and 'us' (the Sikhs) as defenders of the Punjabi language and Sikh religion. Many Sikhs also felt that they had been given a raw deal in the distribution of territory between the Hindus and Muslims as a result of the partition. As phrased by Master Tara Singh, the most prominent leader of the Akali Dal until 1962:

> Every minority except the Sikhs had been given justice. The Muslim's demand was Pakistan, they got it. The scheduled castes[30] wanted representation on population basis with right to contest additional seats and they got it. The Sikhs demanded that they would not (like to) be dominated by any single community and they were mocked for repeating the same demand.
>
> (quoted in Chauhan 1994: 44)

In Punjab before partition, the Hindus constituted a minority with 36 percent of the population and Sikhs were only 13 percent of the population. After the parti-

tion, however, the Hindus became a majority with 61 percent of the population while Sikhs became a sizable minority with 33 percent. The earlier majority, the Muslims, were now almost eliminated as a political entity (Rai 1965: 198–9, in Chauhan 1994). The new constellation provided space for a new dominant other, as argued by Master Tara Singh:

> Now the circumstances have so altered that we have been saved from Muslim domination, but we have been absolutely trapped under Hindu domination.... We cannot survive under Hindu domination.
>
> (quoted in Puri 1989)

This need for 'we-images', or secure selves, relies, as Calhoun (1994) has noted, on a tendency to think of identities in categorical terms rather than as complex notions of relationships or social relations. By attempting to make the term Sikh into a category in relation to a Hindu other, the intention was to transform it into an abstract (but very real for those involved) 'trump-card' identity. However, there are no guarantees that such categorization is always successful in the face of individuals' many fluctuating identities. Studying the situation in Punjab after the creation of the Punjabi Suba in 1966, it is clear that the Akali Dal did not achieve the degree of political power it might have expected in a Sikh majority state. In their attempts to create trump-card salience for Sikh identity, the Akali leadership argued that they were discriminated against by the centre and that the centre was playing electoral politics with issues such as Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas (AIFODR). As argued by Master Tara Singh '... We should understand clearly that there is no place for justice and equality for us in this country. Hence our lives, honour, property and even our religion is in danger... ' (quoted in Narang 1981a). Sant Fateh Singh (the Akali leader following Master Tara Singh) also responded to current events by announcing a fast, to be followed by self-immolation (see Pal Dang 1983).

Rather than bringing the Sikhs together, however, these demands and statements served only to alienate the minorities as well as the Sikhs of more moderate persuasion. Particularly the Sikh low-caste minorities could not be won over by the Akali Dal. Opposition by Mazhabis, who constituted the majority of the landless labourers, was due to the fact that the Mazhabis viewed the Akali Dal as being dominated by the landowning Jat castes.[31] Instead what we saw during the seventies was a political power struggle carried out in the names of the Sikhs and the Hindus but with little success in unifying either the Sikhs or the Hindus. It was not enough to appeal to the Sikh majority. Instead there was a need to more strongly delineate and essentialize an other in relation to demands for a separate Sikh nation. The Sikh leadership's adoption of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in October 1973 tried to achieve both.

The resolution stated for instance that 'the Sikhs of India are a historically recognized political nation ever since the inauguration of the order of the Khalsa in the concluding years of the 17th century'. It went on to claim juridical status by asserting that the Sikh nation had already been internationally recognized and that

the only thing standing between the Sikhs and full nationhood was the 'brute majority of India', which 'denuded the Sikhs of their political identity and cultural particularity'.[32] Under the section entitled 'political aims', it stated that the fundamental goal of the Akali Dal was to seek the 'birth right of the Khalsa through the creation of congenial environment and a political set up'. The essentializing character of the document is clear in its emphasis on 'birth right' and in its attempt to maintain 'the feeling of a separate independent entity of the Sikh Panth'.[33] Even leaders like Sant Fateh Singh, usually known for his more balanced views, argued that the 'freedom that came to India proved chains for the Sikhs'.[34] A selection of symbols and myths from the *Raj Karegha Khalsa* were used to stress the vulnerability of the Sikh religion, accusing the Indian government of hatching a conspiracy against the Sikhs and of resorting to genocide.[35]

The fact that a different document was adopted once the Akali Dal returned to power in 1978 shows, however, the failure of these identity-based tactics at the same time as it most certainly reflects a lack of consensus among the Akali leadership.[36] From an identity perspective it is interesting to note the extent to which this new document was secular in nature. As pointed out by Harish Puri (1984: 51), the 1978 resolution called for giving the Indian Constitution a 'real federal shape by redefining the central and state relations and rights'. It did not even mention the words 'Sikhs' or 'Panth', but talked in more general terms about the fundamental rights of religious and linguistic minorities (Puri 1986: 306). Thus, from 1977 to 1981 the Akali leadership projected itself as a 'political party' determined to make Punjab a model state and committed to the goal of 'a secular democratic socialist society' (Puri 1984: 53). The party's struggle against the imposition of emergency and its alliance with the Janata Party during 1977–80 manifested a desire to remain in the national mainstream of politics.

What this brief account shows is how the Akali Dal (and the Congress for that matter) have tended to be secular in nature when in power, while repeatedly trying to create an in-group essentialism in relation to an established other when out of power. It has done this by stressing religious values, Sikh history of subordinance and linguistic particulars. It is not clear, however, that either party managed to move more than a sub-section of the Punjabi society in a direction where religion was to become the dominant self-identification, at least not until the early eighties. There are probably two reasons for this. One is the fact that neither the Congress party nor the Akali Dal was successful in creating an 'other' against whom to launch their divisive politics, as they both sought support from the Sikh as well as the Hindu communities. Hence, it should be noted that the Akali Dal did not give in to Sikh fundamentalism after the armed clash with the Sant Nirankaris in which sixteen Sikhs were killed in 1978, despite the fact that the attack was Congress supported. The second reason has to do with their failure to build a bridge between personal religious experiences and that of the more secular goals of the collective. There was clearly little resonance between being a Sikh at a personal level and actions involving the collective at the state level. Caste and class identities tended to take precedence over the official version of Sikh identity. This changed during the eighties, as I intend to show in the next chapter.

However, it still differed from the way Hindu nationalists have come together in their attempts to construct a common collective identity.

The Hindu experience

Hindu nationalists have been more successful in making the term 'Hindu' into a category by projecting some common myths or themes onto the other, in this case the Muslims. For instance, Muslims are held responsible for the partition of the 'sacred' Hindu homeland, because they in 1947 claimed that they were a separate nation. Although Muslims (today) constitute only 14 per cent of the population, India is the second largest Muslim country in the world – counting over 112 million people. This number has been hailed by Hindu nationalists as a threat to the Hindu majority as Muslims often tend to act as a vote bank (see Oommen 1994, Patnaik and Chalam 1998). In the construction of the Muslim 'other', Muslims are always referred to as not truly Indian, but as dangerous foreign elements.

This is related to mythicized histories of chaste Rajput women and male Muslim sexuality. In these stories, the Hindu feminine body not only defines Muslim desire, but it also symbolizes the body of Mother India. For Muslims, Hindu nationalists' argue, 'woman' is not the Motherland but the field of desire (*aurat matri bhoomi nahin hai, bhoo bhoomi hai*) (Dutta and Sarkar 1994). According to the myth, this view of womanhood also defines the Muslim's relationship with his country: he desires to conquer her, not worship her – Muslim lust broadens out into power and control over India herself. Here the two neighbouring Muslim majority countries Pakistan and Bangladesh are perceived as constantly enticing Muslims away from India with the intention of destroying the loyalty to the Indian state. Pointing to Indian Muslims' refusal to have a common civil code and insisting on an exclusively personal law based on their religious texts, Hindu nationalists argue that Muslims are creating a separate religious identity (Dutta and Sarkar 1994, Kolodner 1995, Oommen 1994). This, Hindu nationalists say, prevents the process of integrating Muslims into Indian mainstream society.

All these factors make the Muslims an easy target in the perception of the Hindu majority, turning them into a despised and feared other. For instance, the Hindu nationalist party Shiv Sena demonizes and essentializes Muslim characteristics by contrasting them with so called 'pure' Hindu values. The Muslims are described as those who have many children. 'They multiply like termites, grasshoppers, like dogs'. 'They don't send their children to school'. 'Muslims with four wives can have 24 children. If they are allowed to continue, they will soon be a majority in India' (in Engineer 2004: 20). An essentialist fantasy is created by Shiv Sena and RSS ideologues in their efforts to construct a mosaic of Muslim sexuality and violence. 'They are constituted by lust – *unke aankhon me lust hai* (their eyes are full of lust), though they seek to cover it up with "politeness and charm"' (in Dutta and Sarkar 1994: 88). Here essentialist notions of cleanliness tend to be invoked Muslims are regarded as being always dirty. 'The motherland has been defiled by the polluting, disruptive, destructive presence of Muslims' (in Baccheta 2000: 278).[37]

Essentializing the other in the context of Hindus and Muslims cannot be understood, however, without referring to a larger historical context. Peter van der Veer (1996) argues that the discourse on 'Hindu spirituality' and 'Hindu tolerance' has a specific history. The ideal of religious tolerance in the West, he says, derives from an abstraction and universalization of religion that is part of Western discourse of modernity and connected to the notion of modern 'nation-states'. Religious tolerance as a positive value is thus related to the marginalization of religious institutions in Europe, where the earlier violence between religious groups has been replaced with the violence between states.[38] This discourse has consequences for Muslim and Hindu populations incorporated into the modern world-system. Being the old rivals of the Christian West, Muslims are labelled 'fanatic' and 'bigoted,' while Hindus are seen in a more positive light as being 'tolerant'. As a discourse it can be related to the earlier discussion of security as a thick signifier as groups are categorized and racialized differently depending on structural and contextual factors of a society.

The construction of 'tolerance' as the essence of Hindu spirituality in late eighteenth century India should thus be understood as a discourse, intended not only to unite different Hindu groups, but also as an avenue of complaint about the intolerance of those who do not wish to be included, such as the Muslims. In a similar vein, Bhattacharya (in Bose 1997: 155) argues that:

> The discourse of (Hindutva) communalism criticizes other religions for being monolithic, but aspires to build a monolithic unity. It glorifies diversity within Hinduism as a mark of superiority over Semitic religions, but seeks to repress this diversity. It identifies aggressiveness as an evil intrinsic to other religions, but attempts to instill the same quality in all Hindus. It talks of patience and tolerance as innate virtues of Hindus, yet see these traits as the basis of Hindu weakness. It condemns other religions for their politics of religious repression and temple destruction, but organizes itself around the same politics … it demeans both religion and 'tradition'.

This illustrates the problems in conceptualizing Hindu identity as a simple and straightforward process. Actually there are a lot of factors that would impede any unified Hindu movement. Hindu religion, for instance, does not easily lend itself to organized movement in the way that Islam or Christianity may be able to do. As pointed out by Kolodner (1995) and others,[39] there is no recognized clergy or central church to lead a Hindu campaign and no dogma that all Hindus must follow. Neither is there any one single text that has been claimed to have divine authority, making Hindu fundamentalism close to a contradiction in terms as there are so few (agreed upon) fundamentals to follow in Hindu religion. Second, it has been shown that the externally derived term 'Hindu' has never really permeated the identities of many Indians. A villager will more probably think about herself as belonging to a village or a caste than being a Hindu. Paradoxically, it means that what is probably the most fundamental aspect of traditional Hindu society – caste – may present the largest obstacle to the creation of a homogenous

Hindu nation.[40] Because of these obstacles to a unified Hindu movement, it becomes even more important to define the other in essentialized terms as only then can a core self be ascertained and subjectivity be securitized.

It is rather obvious from this outline that the Muslims have been an easily available object of contention in the perception of the Hindu majority, allowing them to be constructed as a despised and feared other. By demonizing the Muslim minority, Hindu nationalist leaders have aimed to unify a diverse set of Hindus and solidify their political support. Together the VHP, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar overall, have all promoted *Hindutva* and relied on a definition of a 'Hindu' as one who minimally accepts two things (Alam 1999: 198). At one level a Hindu is one who is ready to fight Muslims, who are seen as militantly, culturally alien, threatening and a bestial presence in the country. At another level, a Hindu is one who equates the immemorial nation of India with Hindu culture and religion.

Calling for a Hindu Rashtra and Khalistan: in search of 'Chosen Traumas'

In looking for the nation, Indian nationalism thus needs to demonstrate that the nation it wishes to create has always existed. The question concerning the Ayodhya issue becomes one of whether the majority does not have a right to build a temple at Ayodhya? Communalism, in this majoritarian definition, is projected as true nationalism: the nation belongs to the majority and is formed by their history, culture and struggles. Nationalism and communalism are thus made synonymous, and Indian nationalism is imputed with a Hindu religious character, a call for a Hindu *Rashtra* – a Hindu nation. All other notions of nationalism, be they anti-colonial or secular, are portrayed as irrelevant and even unhealthy (Panikkar 1997: 66). Looking at the way secularism[41] is defined by *Hindutva* forces, the BJP, interestingly enough, does not reject secularism but adds the qualification of 'pseudo' to its usage by those who control the political institutions of the Indian state. 'Pseudo-secularism', it contends, has corrupted Indian nationalism and has been eating into the vitals of the Indian 'nation'. Instead true secularism lies in being fair to the Hindu majority, a democratic necessity as *Hindutva* sees it. The BJP, the VHP and the Sangh Parivar in general thus see secularism in the way it is presented by 'secularists' as 'pseudo', because it pampers to the minorities (read Muslims) and follows appeasement policies towards them. It is (as argued by Sangh Parivar), 'inattentive to the internal enemies of nationalism, neglects the sentiments of the majority (read Hindus), and stifles memories of the Hindu view of good life' (Alam 1999: 200).

Part of the problem of Hindu nationalism can be found in the way secularism came to be the guiding principle of post-independence India. India adopted secularism and constitutionalized religious rights as a means to overcome the religious turmoil that had characterized the pre-independence period and which had resulted in the partition. However, the leaders of the independence movement chose a type of secularism that meant a continuous involvement by the state in religious affairs. Rather than separating church and state, which is common in

parts of the West, India opted for the principle of *sarva dharma samabhava* – 'equal respect for all religions'. As a principle it has required government intervention in religious affairs and support of religious activities so that all Indians have an equal opportunity to practice their religions (see Bhargava 1996, Kolodner 1995). In many ways it can be compared to the way multiculturalism as a policy has been implemented in the West in response to increases in migration and demands for political rights. Thus, Indian national leaders claim secular credentials by visiting places of worship of all religious denominations with equal demonstrations of piety and the broadcast media allot time equally to the prayers of different religions.

This choice of intertwining religion and politics was heavily influenced by independence movement leaders like Mohandas Gandhi, who employed a discourse that often resembled the Hindu notion of dharmic obligation. His continued reference to 'Mother India' intentionally invoked characteristics of Hindu religious worship,[42] and despite the fact that he was the most fervent champion of Hindu-Muslim unity, he often took a communitarian view. His attitude towards the Khilafat[43] issue was strongly suggestive of religious assumptions, for instance. This attitude was even more unambiguously expressed during the Malabar rebellion of 1921. He wrote:

> A verbal disapproval by the Mussalmans of Moplah madness is no test of Mussalman friendship. The Mussalman must naturally feel shame and humiliation of Moplah conduct about forcible conversions and looting, and they must work away so silently and effectively that such things might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them.
>
> (Mahatma Gandhi, *Selected Works*, vol. 21, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust, 1966: 321, in Panikkar 1997: 27)

It was, as noted by Panikkar (1997), for the Muslims to feel ashamed and humiliated for what the Mappilas had done and it was for them to ensure that Mappila 'fanaticism' would not erupt again. Gandhi was thus ambivalent in his calls for religious tolerance and universalism as he often based such (moral) universalism on Hindu beliefs and practices.

Religious universalism in India was the early expression of the need for solidarity within and between religions in a society besieged by colonial domination. However, it could not serve this purpose for long, as universalism was not compatible with the defense of religious tradition. The only way to counter colonial cultural hegemonization was through religious particularism. As a result, universalism gave way to particularistic perspectives and Hinduism and Islam were conceived as superior to other religions. The Indian concept of secularism is thus an idealization and romanticization of nineteenth century universalist ideas, integrated into an elite political culture. As argued by Panikkar (1997: 18–19), this is precisely the weakness of the Indian notion of secularism, as it keeps religion in play and in turn enhances religiosity by preserving and projecting religious identities, thus increasing the social distance between religious communities.

Hence the 'Indian' notion of secularism has played an important part for *Hindutva* politics and for transforming the term 'Hindu' into a category; a trump-card identity that overrides other identity constructions. The vilified other becomes the self's alter ego, and a necessary such for the continued esssentialization of self and, as a consequence, for the securitization of subjectivity. Those who do not wish to be included into the majority family of Hindus are thus viewed as 'foreigners', as civilizations not originating on Indian soil. Hindu nationalism, by clearly identifying and projecting unwanted traits of the self onto the other, has thus been successful in its attempts to build majoritarian religious nationalism. This has led some scholars, such as Bose (1997), to argue that majoritarian nationalism is always defined in negative terms, in opposition to a vilified, hated other.

The traumatic experiences of the partition affected and deepened feelings of distrust between Hindus and Muslims. Such feelings have been further exacerbated due to the continuous conflictual relations between India and Pakistan. In many ways one can argue that the partition has worked as a 'Chosen Trauma' that is constantly referred to and validated in new contexts such as riots, the destruction of the Babri mosque, the Kargil conflict or the Gujarat massacre. This theme is developed in chapter six. In comparison it is by no means clear that Sikh nationalism has been equally successful in moving more than a sub-section of the Punjabi society in a direction where religion was to become the dominant self-identification, at least not until the early 1980s.

The issue of the politics of a Sikh homeland, or *Khalistan*, has attracted the attention of a large number of Indian and foreign scholars as it was perceived as one of the major causes for the crises that gripped Punjab from 1982 to 1992. Looking at this issue historically, however, the territorial claim of *Khalistan* or Sikhistan is highly problematic. Raja Ranjit Singh's kingdom was headed by a Sikh ruler, but the boundaries of the empire included several other nationalities and cultural communities, some of which were overwhelmingly Hindu or Muslim. Any claims that the rule of the Khalsa was identical with the kingdom must also be refuted, as it neither established dominance by the Khalsa nor provided a coherent territorial base for the ethnically defined Sikh community. Still, as noted by Chadda (1997: 56; see also Barrier 2000), it did play a critical, symbolic role in the confrontational discourse between the central government and Sikh separatists in the seventies and the eighties.

It would indeed be impossible to describe these years without acknowledging the central role of party politics. In particular, the Congress Party leaders were beginning to look for ways of undermining the Akali appeal and recapture power in Punjab as part of a larger plan to defeat the Janata government in the elections and reinstate Congress at the centre. In an attempt to beat the Akalis at their own game, the Congress began to employ religious themes and symbols against the Akalis. In 1972, for instance, the Akali ministry was dismissed by the centre and fresh elections were held under President's Rule. Congress thus came to power with Giani Zail Singh as Chief Minister. Singh attempted to undermine the Akali base among the Sikhs. For this he sponsored a variety of Nihang chieftans, who

in exchange endorsed the Congress. In an elaborate ceremony, a procession was taken through Punjab along the route that Guru Gobind is said to have travelled and the horses displayed in the procession were said to be the descendants of Guru Gobind's horses. The dung of these horses was carried by the Chief Minister himself, in a vessel on his head and the Nihang chieftan, Baba Santa Singh, participated in the entire procession (AIFODR). This pattern of religious endorsement became even clearer in the Congress patronage of Sant Jairnail Singh Bhindranwale, as the Congress leaders realized they needed the backing of religious figures in their struggle against the Akalis.

What is interesting to note is how the ordeals of the eighteenth century provided a host of symbols to be used within this process of factional politics and national history-making. The Nihangs, for instance, arose as squads of fanatical fighters after Gobind Singh's death. They wore blue, were heavily armed and became a vital component of the armies with which Ranjit Singh built his empire. The Nihangs represent a constant reminder of eighteenth century glories and when the clashes occurred between Bhindranwale and Nirankaris (a rival Sikh sect) in 1978, thirteen of the people killed were in Nihang robes or with Sikh symbols. Similarly, the Dal Khalsa – the army of the pure – was founded in the 1730s to fight the Mughals. In 1978, when disaffected Sikhs formed an organization in their struggle against the government and as a means of achieving a Sikh state, they chose the same name: the *Dal Khalsa* (see Jeffrey 1994: 57–58).

The Dal Khalsa was believed to be financed and encouraged by some Congress leaders due to its opposition to the Akali Dal. At the time of its formation in 1978, new political ideas and Sikh organizations were emerging. The defunct Sikh Student Federation, for instance, was revived as the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF), and was closely linked to Bhindranwale and his followers. The word *Khalistan* was introduced in the 1946 independence negotiations (Chohan and Geaves 2001), while the actual idea was acted upon by Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan in October 1971 through an advertisement in *The New York Times* after his brief spell as a Finance Minister under Lachhman Singh Gill.[44] But it was not until June 1980 that an announcement was made about the formation of *Khalistan* by Balbir Singh Sandhu. In the announcement he put himself forward as the Secretary-General and Jagjit Singh Chauhan as the President of the National Council of *Khalistan* (see Grewal 1994: 218–19, AIFODR and Chadda 1997: 129–32). Both the National Council of *Khalistan* and the Dal Khalsa stood for an independent state for the Sikhs.

Here it should be emphasized, however, that, despite nearly a century of efforts to create and use the Sikh-Hindu divide, there was little or no social tension between Hindus and Sikhs until the end of the 1970s. However, it is clear that religion and nationalism merged in novel ways in the late seventies and early eighties. The rise of non-constituted leadership, like that of Bhindranwale's was related to the concern for a decline in Sikh religion. Bhindranwale's' ability to turn inner personal hardships of disillusioned individuals into community concerns, by building on hatred, exaggerated hopes and attacks on identified enemies, provided a sense of high mission to the hopeless. In the face of this, as

Harish Puri (1989: 338) has noted, the Akali Dal was virtually trapped. Since Bhindranwale's language, history and future visions were built upon the same selective mythological complex of fundamentalism and rhetoric of martial race as the Akalis, it virtually trapped the Akali Dal. Hence, the Akali Dal, although trying to distance itself from fundamentalists and extremism, had little choice but to continue to build upon Sikh nationalism. To this should be added the chain of gurdwaras that provided Sikh nationalists with an organizational network with money, personnel and the ability to sway opinion.

It was within this process that a search for Chosen Traumas took place as a means to supply the nationalist discourse with significant points of references. Here it should be noted that, while nationalism and religious fundamentalism may be the most salient factors in supplying fuel to such a discourse, the nationalist and/or religious community is likely to have most impact if it also claims to be a political community (Oommen 1994, 2002). As a political community it is able to pose a threat to the larger community. This was clearly starting to happen in the late seventies and early eighties and Bhindranwale certainly gave voice to such a claim when he argued that '(i)f the Indian army touches the Golden Temple, then the foundation stone of Khalistan will be laid' (quoted in Mahmood 1996). Chosen Traumas were thus to be found in the history of the Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and the Raj Khalsa, and in the kingdom of Ranjit Singh. The death of Bhindranwale, for instance, is often linked to a heroic historical figure named Baba Deep Singh. Baba Deep Singh was supposed to have carried his own head after it was severed in battle to lay it down at the Golden Temple, thus representing Guru Nanak's injunction to 'come to him in a state of selfless devotion'. In a similar sense Bhindranwale is said to have achieved heroic martyrdom as he refused to leave by a back route when the Indian Army drew closer towards the Golden Temple (Mahmood 1996).

However, the search for Chosen Traumas has by no means been a simple or straightforward process in the case of the Sikhs. As the next chapter shows, the difficulties in separating the history of the Sikhs and the Hindus, together with complex feelings among different Sikh groups towards the state of India, have often made Chosen Traumas (or Glories) too multifaceted to work as essential identity constructions among many Punjabi Sikhs. Events did change, however, as a result of the events in the early eighties and one could distinguish a clear preoccupation with the securitization of subjectivity among many Sikh groups in Punjab and abroad. In the years to come the Sikhs would be transformed (at least in the view of the outsiders) from an established insider to a despised and feared outsider. The fact that the Sikhs had previously been perceived as internal to the system makes one wonder what happened in the eighties as a sense of alienation, withdrawal, anger and humiliation characterized the Sikh community, at the same time as Sikhs were increasingly viewed with distrust, suspicion and even aversion by parts of the Hindu (and other) communities. This is the focus of the next chapter, which deals with the actual events of the Bluestar operation and its consequences in relation to globalization, modernity and Sikh nationalism.

5 Globalization, modernity and the limitations of Sikh nationalism

In chapter one it was stated that globalization has produced various competing centres, where a number of new actors are demanding to be heard both locally and globally. Globalization, it was argued, has facilitated the use of nationalism even in cases when people do not react against globalization as such. The struggle may be regional or local, where the grievances expressed as national feelings are reactions against cultural domination and humiliation as well as against material exploitation through global economic mechanisms. At the core of the discussion are those global/local nodal points that emerge when the global or regional meet the local. These are the forces that change the character of an individual's relationship with her immediate surroundings. It is when domination meets resistance that change is initiated (Kinnvall 2002b). From an identity perspective it reflects the view of identity as a *process of becoming* rather than a process of being, where the result is something that is social and unique at the same time. This is at the heart of psychoanalysis, which is concerned with how discursively constructed subject positions are taken up by concrete persons through fantasy identifications and emotional 'investments'. As exemplified by one Sikh *granthi* (scripture-reader), named Iqbal Singh:

> When someone disturbs the way I want to live, and the Indian government wants me to do it another way, then it becomes politics for them. But not for me. I just have my way of life. I may have to fight for the right to live it that way, but I don't call it politics.
>
> (interview by Cynthia K. Mahmood, 1996: 54)

This and the following chapter are focused upon these *processes of becoming* Sikhs and Hindus, often in opposition to a vilified other. At stake here are those emotional investments that become reflected in affective expressions of hatred, animosity, debasement and the search for Chosen Traumas. Although these expressions are important *per se*, it is as outcomes – or global/local nodal points – that they become of interest here. In socio-psychological terms we may talk about the extent to which an increasing number of Sikhs became concerned with the *securitization of subjectivity* – of finding one seemingly stable and secure identity in the light of global changes. It means, in the case of the Sikhs, that there

is a need to explore how cultural domination and material exploitation worked to create feelings of humiliation and despair during the 1980s, and how such feelings may have resulted in local reactions in the form of Sikh nationalism. There is, in other words, a need to explore how security has worked as a 'thick signifier' among Sikhs at home and abroad. As argued by Deol (2000: 53):

> Frustration and fear may have their roots in identifiable economic and social causes that could be ameliorated by secular remedies within the democratic process, but a religious vision can offer a more readily available solution by legitimizing the violence that is born of hatred and despair.

Theoretically, the Sikh and the Hindu cases both support the notion that it may be easier to construct an identity out of essentialist or primordialist notions of nationhood and/or religion, as they both allow for categorical abstraction and Chosen Traumas in a way that is not always the case for other identity constructions. They answer, in other words, to issues of ontological security and existential anxiety. Constructing an identity based on religious nationalism requires, however, that all those factors that would work as obstacles to the emergence of such an identity are left behind.

Divided selves – the contestation of Sikh identity

As noted earlier, both Sikhs and Hindus are socially diverse. The Sikhs may not be divided in as fragmented fashion as the Hindus, but they are nonetheless separated across antagonistic lines. The foremost division is that between the landowning caste (Jats); the urban artisans, shopkeepers or businessmen (Khatris, Aroras and Ramgharhias); and the Sikh scheduled castes, the converts from former untouchables (Mazhabis and Adharmis). The Jats, who today constitute the landed dominant class both in numbers and in wealth, are not limited to Sikhism but can be found in all of the three major religions of Punjab – Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They are believed, by some, to date all the way back to the Schythian tribes who followed the same route as the Aryans and settled in the area between Afghanistan and Rajasthan. The Jat Sikhs constitute the earliest converts and became a great landowning aristocracy during the kingdom of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. The fact that they constituted the main recruits into the British Army was a major reason for their ability to consolidate power (Akbar 1985: 147–8, Chopra 1984, Deol 2000: 61–2). Traditionally the relationship between the Jats and the urban section of the population has been reflected by economic antagonism against other Sikhs and Hindus. This antagonistic relationship has often taken the shape of Jat stereotyping of the Aroras and Khatris (Pettigrew 1991: 169).

Despite the preeminence of Jats in the Sikh tradition, it is worth pointing out that all the Sikh gurus were Khatris, rather than Jats. To further complicate any one-dimensional readings of Sikh identity, one should note how most Khatris have dominant Hindu affiliations, expressed in such widespread customs as hav-

ing one son baptized as a Khalsa Sikh while the other children remain Hindus. In addition, many peasants had, at least up until the religious reform movement in the 1870s, been too preoccupied with the heavy toll of daily life to have time to observe the rituals of religious traditions, such as the Khalsa dress code. As a result, the religious differences between Sikhs and Hindus have often been historically weak among peasants. In response to the increasing conversion rate of Hindus to Muslims and Christians, the emphasis in the early reform movement of the late nineteenth century was also more on being non-Muslims and non-Christians than being non-Hindus (Purewal 2000: 41).[1] To this can be added how caste, despite the explicit denunciation of the caste system among Sikh gurus, has continued to be observed in practice. It is executed through the division of labour, the choice of marriage partner, and through the socialization process of children. As one of my informants described it:

> Caste is still very strong. On the top you see that people are mingling more – I have never refused to take tea from anybody. And when they go to the Gurdwara they will all take water from the same well, but when they come back to the village, caste matters.
>
> (interview with a male Jat farmer near Amritsar)

Akali politics has been powered by the Jats, while the Mazhabi Sikhs have tended to be anti-Akali as they fear Jat Sikh domination. This is one of the reasons why Mazhabis have always opposed a Sikh state. The fact that the Mazhabis constitute one fifth of the population has repeatedly deprived the Akalis of a significant proportion of their voter base (Akbar 1985: 148). This, together with the fact that there has usually been a preference for the Congress among the urban Sikhs and that not all Jat Sikh peasantry share the Akali dream of a theocratic state, show the difficulty in constructing *one* Sikh identity valid for all. Also, one cannot ignore the unequal power structures of most villages, where Jat Sikhs are often in a favourable position to define what a Sikh should think, or Hindu fellow villagers for that matter. As emphasized by one Sikh woman:

> the Hindus in the village have no say because they just have to call us. If we say to them to vote for Congress they vote for Congress, if we want them to vote for Khalistan they will vote for Khalistan. It is the same thing with the scheduled castes. We will tell them how to vote because we have helped a lot of people of the lower classes. So that is why they are going to follow us, to obey us.
>
> (interview with a 30-year-old Jat woman doing agricultural business in a village outside Amritsar).

Add to this the marginalized role of women within all Sikh groups. As noted by Ravinder Kaur (2004), the presumed absence of inequities between sexes within the Sikh community fails to explain the adverse sex ratio (882 females per 1000

men), neglect of female children, dowry deaths and institutionalized violence against females.

Sikh scholarship divided: the (re)interpretation of history

All these factors point to a community divided along lines of identity. However, it is not only the Sikh community that is divided; also Sikh studies have become increasingly diversified and even antagonistic. The debate within Sikh studies is concerned with the emergence of Sikh identity as manifest in the *Khalsa* tradition and its relationship to the larger Hindu society. This debate has clearly resembled the general debates within social science, where various versions of critical (often poststructural) scholarship have been confronted by a mixture of primordialist and instrumentalist perspectives. Hence, poststructural scholars, such as Harjot Oberoi (1994), have claimed that, prior to colonialization and the religious movements of the 1870s, most Sikhs occupied multiple identities and there were no clear boundaries between religious, caste, class or geographical identities but people moved in and out of these identities. Early Indian religions, Oberoi maintains, were characterized by diversity and pluralism and it was only through the British Raj that a systematic discourse of Sikhism was established. The Singh Sabha (or Tat Khalsa) movement (1870–1919), established such a new discourse by carefully selecting symbols, ceremonies and customs, thus providing the Sikhs with a separate and distinct Sikh identity.

W.H. McLeod (1976), another critical scholar, takes a different but yet similar approach and argues that, in order to properly understand the evolution of Sikh identity, we must recognize how much of this evolution was inspired by the *Sant* tradition. Here McLeod maintains that the *Sahajdhari* Hindu identity has inspired Sikh identity formation up until our times and that the *Khalsa* identity is not the only definition of Sikh identity. In this sense, McLeod sees Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh identity only if we limit it to refer to the person to whom the Panth's beginnings can be traced. In contrast, he questions Guru Nanak as a founder of Sikh identity if by founder one refers to the antecedents of Guru Nanak's thoughts. J.S. Grewal (1998), while sympathetic to McLeod's writings, disagrees with his interpretation of Guru Nanak as being firmly established in the *Sant* tradition. Emphasizing the similarity in ideas disregards the actual differences between the teachings of Guru Nanak and the *Sant* tradition, Grewal claims. As a consequence, Guru Nanak, through his anti-Brahmanical views, the institutionalization of *langar* (free meals) and *sangat* (Sikh congregation), must be viewed not only as the organizational father of Sikh identity but also as the spiritual father. Shinder Purewal (2000), another critical scholar, gives credit to Grewal, McLeod and Oberoi, at the same time as he argues that they all have ignored the material context of Sikh history. According to Purewal, one must understand how the essence of the Sikh gurus' teachings appealed to the oppressed peasantry and how Sikhism became a source of inspiration for revolutionary movements against oppression and exploitation.

Against these critical scholars, a number of voices have been raised; some of which have even asserted that a historical approach is not valid for the study of religion. McLeod, Oberoi, and to a lesser extent Grewal have, together with scholars like Mark Jurgensmeyer, Gurinder Singh Mann and Joseph O'Connell, been charged with misrepresenting Sikhism and Sikh history. They have been accused of lacking sympathy and even of hostility towards Sikh tradition. Most malicious has been the criticism against McLeod and Oberoi. The original criticism was mostly of McLeod's works and was expressed by, among others, Sardar Daljeet Singh, Justice Gurdev Singh and Professor Jagjit Singh. Justice Gurdev Singh, for instance, attributed evangelist motives to McLeod, arguing that he was neither a sound historian nor an honest scholar but that he was 'out to undermine the Sikh tradition' (Grewal 1998: 128). Compared to later opponents of critical Sikh scholars, however, most of the earlier criticism was rather mild and academic.

The new opponents of critical scholars like McLeod and Oberoi, often use a language of resentment and anger, attacking them of Western blasphemy and unethical attacks against the Sikhs. In this they reject poststructural ideas about identity in favour of primordialist versions. Those Sikh writers associated with critical scholarship are hence said to be pseudo-Sikhs, who have jumped on the 'band-wagon' and are 'docile', 'role dancing' and 'myopic' (Grewal 1998: 228). These new opponents of critical scholarship represent institutions in India and North America, both academic and professional. In these positions they frequently have direct access to the SGPC's president. Mostly they argue that Westerners and those Sikhs sympathetic to critical scholarship have ulterior anti-Sikh motives who, through their use of 'mischievous propaganda', participate in some kind of 'international conspiracy' (Grewal 1998: 228–30). Both G.S. Dhillon and S.S. Sodhi, two opponents of critical scholarship, associate the works of McLeod, Oberoi and others with missionary activities. Most of the critical scholars, Sodhi argues, started as missionaries and they are 'either non-believers or they are running away from their own religions' (S.S. Sodhi in Grewal 1998: 233). As a consequence these new primordialist scholars have taken it upon themselves to project the 'authentic' image of Sikhism in the West. Included in such an image is to forcefully prevent certain aspects of Sikh tradition to be the subject of rational analysis. Such aspects should remain sacrosanct, as a matter of belief is not debatable, according to these scholars (Grewal 1998: 293). Instead incorrect images should be reported and rebutted, with some critics favouring 'the idea of bringing "the culprits" to "the book" through extra-academic means' (Grewal 1998: 234).

This debate has become intensified after the violent events in Punjab in the 1980s and is seen by many as an attempt to strengthen and promote Sikh identity in the West. As discussed below, such promotion is intimately connected to the redefining of cultural and religious boundaries among Sikh immigrants in the West. It is also, however, a telling example of how history is used, redefined and contested in the battle for inclusive identities that clearly demarcate the borders of who is inside and who is outside. As argued in chapter two, collective memo-

ries, myths and tradition generates both legitimacy and mobilization. Hence, if one can trace the genealogy of an identity group back to a specific time and place, identity can be seen as something natural, something you are born into. The current debate between constructivists and primordialists in Sikh studies certainly reflects this way of thinking. While a number of critical scholars emphasize the fluidity of Sikh identity, most of their opponents try to establish a definitive time, place and person in order to trace the lineage of Sikhism.[2] However, as we have seen from this brief outline, this is a precarious thing to do considering the diversity of thought, caste affiliation, cultural customs and economic realities for different groups of Sikhs.

The questions that need to be answered at this point are therefore concerned with the extent to which various identity patterns came together during the eighties to account for one dominant religious nationalist identifier. To understand the degree to which the Punjabi society was becoming increasingly 'ripe' for extremist mobilization and manipulation, it is important to be aware of how globalization corresponded to the socio-economic changes that were taking place at this time.

Globalization, the Green Revolution and the construction of Sikh nationalism

> If you desire peace, cultivate justice but at the same time cultivate the fields to produce more bread, otherwise there will be no peace.
>
> (Borlaug in Sharma 1981: 65)

This warning was given by Norman Borlaug as he received the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to the 'Green Revolution'. In India, the Green Revolution was launched in November 1966 and reached its culmination in the early 1970s. It refers to the introduction of high yielding varieties of seeds and a package of modern inputs signifying a new agricultural technology that was import-, energy- and capital-intensive. It had a far more spectacular success in Punjab than in any other part of the country.[3] The term 'green revolution' can not be understood apart from globalization, however, as it was introduced in the late 1960s as a development strategy that could potentially provide a technical solution to a social problem, 'because profound social upheaval of land reform could be prevented by the use of new technology' (Hadjor 1993: 134, in Deol 2000: 126). It was often referred to as an attempt to spread the American model of agricultural expansion to scientists from other countries and Asia became one of the main targets. The choice of terminology was also a way to counter and contrast it to the 'red revolution' – a term commonly used to describe radical political transformations headed by Moscow. In this sense it was a global strategy intended to change rural social and economic conditions in Asia and Latin America, initiated to further the geopolitical interests of the United States (Hariss 1987: 229–30, in Deol 2000: 127; see also Purewal 2000). Its impact as a strategy can be compared to the structural adjustment policies launched a decade later which, as discussed in chapter one, are seen as part and parcel of globalization.

Punjab was selected as element of a larger agricultural and political strategy for several reasons. One had to do with irrigation. In 1967–68, 58.4 per cent of the area sown in Punjab was irrigated, whereas the national average was a mere 19.7 per cent. In 1975–6, this number had risen to 75 per cent and was 93 per cent in 1991–2.[4] Another major factor had to do with the extension of the road structure in Punjab compared to other areas. In 1969 Punjab had 270 kilometres road length per lakh (100,000) of population while the average for India was 180 kilometres. By the end of the 1970s, 95 per cent of Punjab's villages were linked by tarred roads (Jeffrey 1994: 79). The consumption of electrical power was a further indication of the relative degree of modernization. While the average consumption of electricity per 1000 inhabitants was 76,012 kwh in 1969–70, in Punjab it was 181,044 kwh. By May 1976, 100 per cent of the villages of Punjab were electrified while the average for the rest of the country was only 37.7 per cent of the villages (Puri 1983: 100). A fourth indicator of the development of agriculture had to do with education. As pointed out by Deol (2000: 150–1), when comparing the value of education in India to that of the West, not only does education provide an opportunity for agricultural research and learning skills, but it also means that non-agricultural income can supplement income from the land. From a cultural perspective, education also raises the value of a potential bride or bridegroom. In Punjab, literacy was relatively high at 29.91 per cent in 1971 compared to a national average of 21.77 per cent. By 1974, 78 per cent of primary-age children in Punjab were attending school, and by 1992, 49 per cent of the population in Punjab was literate.[5]

This combination of irrigation, road structure, electricity and education made Punjab the best choice for the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds. Add to this the fact that large numbers of Punjabis had served as soldiers in the British army and had become increasingly globalized by living as immigrant workers in foreign countries, and one gets a picture of a relatively greater keenness in Punjab for modernization. Sikh emigrant funding, as discussed further below, was also an added source of required capital for the agriculture that was encouraged by various government measures. In 1968, the Punjab government decided, for instance, to implement a scheme under which overseas Sikhs could send a tractor or other agricultural machinery to Punjab without paying excise tax. It has been estimated that about 3,000 tractors were sent to Punjab under this scheme and that total remittances amounted to around $500 million dollars a year (Singh Tatla 1999: 66). In 1977–8, 71 per cent of the farming families were covered by cooperative credit and other lending societies (Puri 1983: 99). Comparing Punjab to other states, it is placed in quite a favourable position in respect to overseas funding as it has a large number of immigrants in hard currency countries such as England, Canada, the US, and Australia, together with increased immigration into the rich Gulf countries. As many as 1.5 million Sikhs were estimated to be living abroad by the mid-1980s, which in real terms meant that one out of ten Sikhs lived outside of India (Purewal 2000: 3). It has also been argued that in the 1980s, as the conflict escalated, emigrants' remittances were estimated to be between 200 and 500 million US dollars a year, with a peak of 1.8 billion dollars in 1983–4 (Gayer 2002: 227–8).

If these statistics clarify the agricultural and political reasons for choosing Punjab as an experimental state in which to launch the Green Revolution, they say little about the social and political consequences of this development. Before proceeding to the problematic aspects of these changes it ought to be pointed out that most rural people have gained financially from the expansion of agricultural output. A study of income differentiation as a result of the Green Revolution reveals that the modernization of agriculture in Punjab has created supplementary employment and income to small farmers, such as dairy farming, leasing of farm assets, and household enterprises.[6] A study published in the *Indian Labour Journal* also found that Punjab was the only state where the average household income of farmers was above the poverty line.[7]

Still it would be a mistake to believe that the results of the Green Revolution were distributed equally. Instead there was a widening of regional balances and an increase in disparities both in the state of Punjab and between different regions in India. Another problem had to do with the widening gap between a small number of rich and middle class farmers and the larger numbers of small and marginal farmers. A number of my interviewees pointed to the direct relationship between the Green Revolution as a globalizing strategy and the rationale behind much militant activities. The combination of increased employment and inflated wealth for some, but not for others, made the tactics of kidnapping and ransom both possible and profitable:

> The Green Revolution made people richer, [which meant] they became easy targets for the terrorists. Most people who were kidnapped in the village were rich and ransom was paid for them.
>
> (interview with a 33-year-old male Jat farmer near Amritsar)

This is related to the rising number of what Puri (1983: 101) has called the rural 'proletariat', which refers to agricultural labourers who have no rights to land. They constitute one third of the rural population and 20 per cent of the total population of Punjab. Between 1971 and 1981 the agricultural labour force increased by 24.8 per cent. This growth had to do with a number of factors. There had been a decline in established occupations such as potters, weavers and shoemakers whose traditional skills had been rendered useless by mechanization. There had also been a complete elimination of pure tenant holders and hired labour had increased at the expense of family labour (Deol 2000: 135–6, Sharma 1981: 77). The traditional source of income for Sikh youth – the army – was furthermore changing its recruitment policies after independence to account for proportionate representation from all states (Purewal 2000: 66). Punjab had also experienced high levels of both emigration and immigration, where migratory workers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and other states had joined the forces of Punjabi agricultural workers (Grewal 1994: 210–11). The fact that Bihari workers often received (and continue to receive) an average of 35 per cent less than the average wage decided by the state government, affected wage patterns in Punjab, where real wages have not increased since the mid-1970s (Purewal 2000: 67).[8]

This pattern of migration led some observers to conclude that 'rural areas of the region are getting depleted of their more resourceful elements' (Oberoi and Singh 1983), which, they argued, could have severe social and political consequences. To this should be added the lack of an industrial revolution in Punjab, where the transition from agriculture to industry has taken place mainly within the agricultural sector. Shinder Purewal (2000: 64–67) attributes this to the discriminatory policies of the central government, which, he argues, have kept heavy industry out of reach of Punjab in its objective to achieve food security. Finally, one should not discount the imbalances created by capital inflows from emigrant funding – pointing to another intrinsic aspect of globalization. Such inflows brought inflation, inequalities of development and social tension. Inflation increased as the price of land rose dramatically in the emigrants' districts and deep inequalities arose between those areas with overseas connections and those without them. Finally social tensions emerged between the new emigrant groups and previous traditional leadership (Gayer 2002).

Hence the Green Revolution, viewed in the light of globalization, certainly did result in social and political repercussions – at least indirectly. As a result of the Green Revolution, there was an increase in wealth among the Jat farmers, leading to a growth in consumerism at the same time as their contributions to the SGPC rose enormously. In the urban areas a kind of 'pseudo-Western' elite was created in terms of life style. However, it was an elite that simultaneously kept traditional and parochial values. The consumption of Indian-made foreign liquor also increased by five hundred per cent in two decades and smuggling became an organized trade involving politicians, police and the underworld. The normative order of the villages changed and sometimes disintegrated with the availability of guns and other 'sophisticated' weapons, and conflicts were often settled with force (Puri 1989).[9]

This increase in wealth, together with more general processes of globalization and modernization, affected conventional ways of life and seemed to threaten Sikh religious values of simplicity and asceticism. As traditional life styles started to erode people were increasingly experiencing feelings of dislocation and uncertainty. As discussed in the theoretical chapters, and emphasized by Puri (1989: 338), such feelings often motivate people to search for simple explanations and dramatic action, something which religion tends to provide. This also appears to have been the case in Punjab. A wide-reaching campaign of *Amrit Prachar* (the preaching of purity)[10] in the villages was launched in response to the concern for a decline in faith and vitality of the Sikh religion (Puri 1989). Together with improved communication, this opened the way for religious leaders like Bhindranwale, who could now spread their militant messages to the countryside.

Hence, at least three factors regarded as innate parts of globalization seem to have been of major importance to explain this revivalist upsurge in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One had to do with the role of the global Sikh diaspora, a theme returned to below. The diaspora was involved in the creation of inflation, inequalities between regions and in producing an increase in social tensions. A second closely related factor had to do with the escalating knowledge of international affairs. As a result of the Green Revolution, Punjab had a higher rate of television

sets than any other state. This made Sikhs increasingly aware of the so-called Islamic revival in Muslim countries, making some sectors of Sikh society argue that Sikhs could (and should) rise in a similar way (Jeffrey 1994: 130). Third, the people of Punjab, like people in the rest of India, were being drawn into a more complex world where religious practices, such as unshorn hair,[11] were becoming difficult to uphold, especially among young men. This in turn resulted in a search for alternative ways of showing that traditional values were still important. The discourse of globalization and modernity was thus set against that of religious tradition in an antagonistic fashion. In India such antagonism is by no means a novel phenomenon but can be found in the more general colonial meta-discourse of progress and modernity, in comparison to indigenous meta-narratives of salvation (van der Veer 1996: 143, Jeffrey 1994).

The search for securitized subjectivity – the rise of Bhindranwale

Bhindranwale, with his 'sense of flair' and his 'feel for the theatrical' was in a particularly advantageous position to answer such calls for traditional values (see Puri 1989). His real name was Jarnail Singh and he was born in 1947 to a peasant farmer and was the youngest of seven sons. He is said to have studied at primary school level and to then be handed over to a Sant Kartar Singh, who ran a religious center (*taksaal*) in the village of Bhindran (thus Bhindranwale), known as the Dam-Dami Taksaal. Sant Kartar Singh's son, Amrik Singh, was later to become President of the All-India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF); an organization that became banned for secessionist activities in 1984. Despite Bhindranwale's brief schooling he is said to have become a devoted student of Sikh scriptures and was soon able to quote texts when preaching sermons (Puri 1989, Deol 2000, Purewal 2000). In 1977 he became head of the Dam-Dami Taksaal, which resulted in the prefix *Sant* (Saint) and the suffix Bhindranwale by which he was later known, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Not long after his succession he started touring villages addressing Sikh youth and encouraging them to return to the spartan traditions started by Guru Gobind Singh, such as not to trim their hair and beards and to abstain from smoking, drinking and taking drugs. He also encouraged them to wear the Khalsa symbols and everywhere he went he baptized young people in the hundreds (Mahmood 1996, Puri 1989). As one follower reported:

> There used to be baptism ceremonies at least twice a month, later more often as Santji[12] became more popular. Sometimes thousands of people would get baptized in a single day. Santji's impact was so powerful, people would rush forward, not only to get baptized but to join him, to give up their homes and their families to stay with him. /…/ He expected the same devotion from everybody who joined him. We follow in the footsteps of Baba Deep Singh, he would say, heads in our palms. Such an inspiration he gave will never be forgotten. Anybody who saw him was touched by him.
>
> (quoted in Mahmood 1996: 78)

It was during his village tours that he started to realize the extent to which the rival sect of the Nirankaris had a large number of followers among the poor.[13] The Nirankaris did not, however, make a clear distinction between Hindus and Sikhs and they were not engaged in the rituals of baptism. Bhindranwale took advantage of this and invoked the strategy of Sikh reformers by claiming that Hinduism was engulfing the Sikhs at the same time as he made the non-orthodox Nirankaris the targets of his anti-Hindu messages (Purewal 2000: 121–2). He also directed his followers to carry, besides the *kirpan*[14] (sword), modern firearms like rifles and pistols, to become *Shastradhari* Sikhs (weapon-bearers) in line with the warrior-Guru, Gobind Singh. As one of my interview subjects phrased it:

> His speeches were very provocative, always on buying weapons and vehicles instead of TVs or other consumer goods. He often pointed out that if one Sikh kills 5–6 Hindus, they (the Hindus) can be eliminated.
>
> (Interview with a 35-year-old male farmer, belonging to the Kamboh caste, near Amritsar)

After listening to many hours of Bhindranwale's speeches, Kushwant Singh was of the firm opinion that Bhindranwale preached hatred and violence, fabricating facts to suit himself which no one dared to question. 'His was not the voice of reason but of unthinking passion unconcerned with the tragic consequences that engulfed his entire community and country' (Singh 1992: 53).

Bhindranwale also benefited from the fact that he could exploit the audiocassette to spread his message at a time when a large number of Punjab's population was still illiterate. The audiocassettes were a cheap alternative to conventional media at a time when people felt the need for traditional messages but when novel globalized media, such as television, films and cassette tapes, made them look for drama and emotion. 'A sant had always had to be an entertainer; Bhindranwale understood that now the competition was different' (Jeffrey 1994: 135; see also Juergensmeyer 2000). Using audiocassettes, together with loudspeakers, printed pamphlets and posters, he denounced the evils of modernity. He also condemned factionalism and internal disagreements among the Sikhs, emphasizing the importance of staying united to attain their goals and face their enemies. As emphasized by a 23-year-old Sikh male in a village close to Amritsar:

> Bhindranwale is a good leader because he wanted the welfare of the Sikhs and brought awareness to the man in the public and made the people not cutting their hair … He was even listening to the complaints of the Hindus.

His sermons were focused on the injustices and discrimination of the Sikhs from the Government and he looked back to the time of the Gurus to justify Sikh resistance by promising his audience the establishment of *Khalsa Raj*, comparing the present days with the worst times of the Mughal tyranny:

> If a handful of Sikhs could then triumph over the Mughals, it should not be difficult for the Sikhs to oust the government of today.
>
> (Bhindranwale, in K. Singh 1992: 52)

With his supposedly good looks, charisma and his ability to captivate an audience by quoting religious texts and historical events, he managed to make these events seem relevant to justify present actions (see Juergensmeyer 2000, Puri 1989). By doing this he was activating previous, real or imagined, injustices and glories (Chosen Traumas/Glories). The use of force for a righteous cause was, for instance, repeatedly traced to religious/historical myths and events such as the saving of sacred places in the face of destruction. Using a notion of primordial lineage was, in other words, characteristic of Bhindranwale's sermons and can also be found in official SGPC documents explaining how Bhindranwale could become so influential:

> All we seek to state in relation to the Sikh ideology, the training and psyche of the Sikhs is that when it is a question of the desecration or an attack on their Gurus and their sacred places, the reaction has been most intense and spontaneous, particularly from devout Sikhs.
>
> (Singh Dhillon 1996: 162)

Through the use of religious revivalism and through his attempts to authenticate historical myths, Bhindranwale managed to narrow down the definition of what constituted a 'real' Sikh. A real Sikh would reject consumerism, abstain from alcohol and drugs and make religious values the guiding principle in life. Righteousness was to create a new identity for the Sikhs, an identity that should be defended if violated:

> No Sikh is afraid of dying, death is a game for a Sikh, there is a difference between a mere man and a Sikh. When you cut off a part of a man's body he screams with pain, when you do the same to a Sikh, he reads the *bani* (scripture).
>
> (Interview with Bhindranwale, in Singh Dhillon 1996: 163).

In doing this he often emphasized the separate identity of the Sikhs, using the term *quam* to describe the religious and national characteristics of the Sikhs. This was the same term used by the Muslims in their calls for a separate state, Pakistan (see Deol 2000: 170). Hence it is clear that, although Bhindranwale was not an explicit supporter of *Khalistan*, he relied on a linguistic term that was intimately connected to the notion of statehood.[15]

> You asked me about *Khalistan*. I neither support it, nor am I against it. /…/ Yes, if they give us *Khalistan*, we will take it. We won't make the mistake of 1947. We are not asking for it but we'll take it if they give it to us.
>
> (Interview with Bhindranwale in *Sunday*, May 15–21, 1983: 26-9. Quoted in Singh Dhillon 1996: 186)

Bhindranwale's religious messages, often delivered in a captivating style (according to many of my interview subjects), together with his insistence on Sikhs as having a distinct national and religious identity, as constituting a *quam*, seemed to provide some answers to the existential anxieties and ontological insecurities many people in Punjab were feeling at these times of rapid change. It is at such times that symbolic acts carry particular meaning and often serve to intensify an already existing conflict. As noted by Robin Jeffrey (1994: 144):

> In May 1981, for example, the All-India Sikh Students' Federation, led by Bhindranwale's confidant, Amrik Singh, began a campaign to ban the sale of tobacco within the walled city of Amritsar. Hindu traders objected. A Hindu-led pro-cigarette procession of 10 000, some carrying swords marched through Amritsar on 29 May. On 31 May, 20 000 Sikhs, many brought in from the countryside by appeals from Bhindranwale and 'almost all … armed', paraded through the city.

If this combination of a separate religious identity and a separate state was seductive to many Sikhs in Punjab, it appealed perhaps even more so to the romanticism of overseas Sikhs. As noted by Harnik Deol (2000), the Sikh migrant communities had, long before the attack on the Golden Temple, put great emphasis on the ties with Punjab through kinship and culture, continuing the Sikh tradition of interpreting and expounding *gurbani*, the holy word of the Sikh gurus. The global expansion of air travel, telephone services and regional news via satellite television had further intensified the contacts between the Sikh diaspora and Punjab. However, the actual idea of an independent Sikh state had received little response in the diaspora prior to the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple. This has made some scholars like Gayer (2002), argue that Sikh nationalism was more of an export to the diaspora from India than the other way around.

However, Gayer simultaneously acknowledges that much of the *Khalistan*i rhetoric had been adopted from Britain, Canada and the US and that the Sikh diaspora played an important role in the global promotion of a sovereign Sikh state. Still, and in line with the general argument of this book focusing on the global-local nexus, these ideas could only be influential in Punjab because of a local willingness and readiness to adopt them. Local history, tradition and the current circumstances provided fertile soil for these ideas to grow during the years to come. While the ideas behind the *Khalistan*i movement were influential in Punjab for only a few years due to the way the conflict progressed, they continued to play an important role in the diasporic communities. This influence, as discussed below, is itself associated with the structural alienation and insecurity many of these communities feel in regard to their host societies. The appeal to religious nationalism constitutes a way to temporarily solve such insecurities – that is, to securitize subjectivity among many migrants. Understanding the way the *Khalistan*i movement became widely spread in the diaspora is thus important for clarifying security as a thick signifier in the Sikh case, as it throws light on the contextual aspects of security.

The Sikh diaspora and the migrants' construction of Khalistan

The extent to which overseas Sikhs constitute a diaspora has been debated. However, as Darshan Singh Tatla (1999) has argued, the migrant Sikh community satisfies the psychological and sociological attributes of a diaspora, as they share a mutual feeling of displacement strengthened by a number of events. One of these events has taken place already in 1902–03 with Sikh migrants' perceived right to settle in any part of the British Empire. The arrival of an increasing number of Sikhs to California and British Columbia created much hostility towards them and ended in open conflict in 1908, as Sikhs were publicly humiliated and forced back to the ships on which they had arrived (Singh Tatla 1999). Another event affecting Sikh immigrants was the *Komagata Maru* incident on 21 May 1914. As the Japanese ship, *Komagata Maru*, carrying 346 prospective Sikh immigrants arrived in Vancouver, its passengers were not allowed to disembark and were instead sent back to India. The 'yellow menace' was a danger, as Sir Richard MacBride, the prime minister of Canada, phrased it:

> To admit Orientals in large numbers would mean in the end the extinction of white peoples and we have always in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country.
>
> (K. Singh 1991: 179, in Deol 2000: 120)

Once back in Calcutta the passengers were ordered to board a train to Punjab. As many refused to obey, some of them were killed, wounded or interned. This treatment of Sikh migrants created much sympathy in Punjab and also acted as a main progenitor for the emerging Gadr propaganda.[16]

Another major event affecting the Sikh migrants' collective beliefs of forced displacement was the partition. As thoroughly documented, the partition brought havoc to millions of people as they moved to either side of the new successor states, India or Pakistan. Hundreds of thousands were slaughtered and women from all groups were sexually assaulted, reinforcing the communal boundaries between the groups. The third, and perhaps most critical, event was the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984, which led many migrant Sikhs to look back towards their homeland and religious traditions. The events that followed – the military counter-insurgency in rural Punjab, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the Delhi massacre and the anti-Sikh riots in Haryana – only served to intensify these feelings.[17] As expressed by the President of the World Sikh Organization in Canada:

> I used to cut my hair before 1984. When the Golden Temple attack occurred, not only me, lots of other Sikhs in Canada, in England, in America, they came back to their faith … But very strongly came back because their faith was hurt, their faith was attacked by the government of India.
>
> (interview conducted by Laurent Gayer, 2002: 236)

Coming back to the faith was closely connected to the desire for a 'home' or a 'homeland'. This is a common pattern among many diaspora communities, not

only the Sikhs, as discussed in chapter two. As such it constitutes a sense of belonging, a place-making process, demarcating a lingering nationalism, where boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of us and them, are contested. The growth of Gurdwaras and the dissemination of Punjabi newspapers in the UK and North America promoting a Sikh identity can be seen as such a place-making process. And so can the creation of institutional organizations, such as the Khalistan Council in the UK, the World Sikh Organization in North America, and various factions of the Babbar Khalsa International, Dal Khalsa and the militant Sikh Youth Federation throughout the diaspora (Shani 2002). Operation Bluestar hence intensified the attachment to these diaspora spaces, as they provided answers to feelings of anger, resentment and grief affecting the diaspora Sikh communities.

However, it would be impossible to separate out these immediate reactions to the event from the more general phenomenon of the globalization of identity politics as a 'process through which groups modify their sense of belonging under the influence of transnational relations, ideas or events, the reshaping of their ethnicity affecting in turn world politics, at the national, international and supranational level' (Gayer 2002: 225). Hence Gayer (2002), Shani (2002), Singh Tatla (1999) and Axel (2001) all emphasize how we cannot understand this event in purely psychological terms, but must take into account at least two important socio-political dynamics. One has to do with the geographical origin of the emigrants, which impacted on the extent to which the *Khalistan* movement was supported. A second reason can be found in the domestic politics of the migrants' communities in Great Britain, Canada and the United States, especially in regard to public opinion on immigrant communities and to trends in foreign policy.

As Gayer (2002) has noted, it is generally Jat Sikhs, especially *amritdharis* (or initiated Sikhs), who have been the most uncompromising supporters of *Khalistan*. Jats generally subscribe to a more traditionally devout religious conviction through the encouragement among them to become initiated and to remain *keshdhari* Sikhs. The attack on the Temple was interpreted as an assault on their religion and the idea of a theocratic state became appealing to formerly or newly baptized Jat Sikhs. Jats also have the strongest ties to Punjab in economic, cultural and political terms and many migrant Jat Sikhs have kept the dream of returning to their homeland. This made them regard Operation Bluestar as an imperialist attack on their homeland where the only solution was secession from India. Finally, the *Khalistan* movement granted the Jats an opportunity to assert their domination over the diaspora community as they could use their economic and political ties in their host countries to express their grievances. Such attempts were resented by other Sikh religious diasporic communities, such as the Namdharis, Nirankaris and Radhasoamis, as well as by Sikh outcasts, Ravidasis, and the craftsmen caste, the Ramgharias, who have all been very critical of the *Khalistan* movement in the diaspora (Gayer 2002: 237–8). Again, it is important to note how also the diaspora community provides many versions of Sikh identity, and how issues of power and dominance are always deeply connected to questions of religion and nationalism.

This is particularly apparent as we turn to the linkage between the policies of the host communities and the political mobilization of the Sikh diaspora in favour of *Khalistan*. In all the major countries in which Sikhs have settled, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, various policies of multiculturalism were initiated in the 1970s. These policies, as discussed in chapter two, were meant to promote and support individuals in their efforts to maintain their language, culture and identity. As both Gayer (2002) and Axel (2001) have argued, such changes in the institutional framework of the host societies legitimated 'politics of recognition' in both the private and the public spheres. 'Praise of bilingualism' and 'unity in diversity' encouraged immigrants to reinterpret their 'traditions' and to have them recognized by state or federal authorities, in a context of economic and social uncertainty' (Gayer 2002: 239).

One should note, for example, how the Sikhs are almost invisible in public life in the United Kingdom, despite the fact that almost half a million out of a total of one million Sikhs living abroad reside there. The fact that they, as a group, constitute one of the most upwardly mobile communities in the UK has had few repercussions in the political sphere, where they remain structurally marginalized. As a consequence, the Sikhs, and other minorities, have become more directly involved in various forms of 'politics of recognition'. The 'Turban Victory'[18] and the Race Relations Act of 1976 were important evidence of this new politics. Another important aspect had to do with the revival of British nationalism under Margaret Thatcher, where the Falklands War played a great role. This left Sikh and other minority communities to fend for themselves and strengthen their own collective identities. Paradoxically, the 'economic reforms and ethnic nationalism associated with Thatcherism led to the creation of a prosperous, Sikh middle-class willing and able to mobilise in support of a homeland but reluctant or unable to participate in British political life' (Shani 2002: 203). Similar cases have taken place in North America involving the turban and other matters of dress.[19]

Here it is interesting to note that Sikhs in all three countries have generally done well in economic terms and that economic frustration may play a lesser role in the case of Sikhs than it has among other migrant groups. Instead it appears to have been social and religious frustration felt by community leaders that played an important part in the homeland issue. As Dusenbery (1995) has noted, and as explored in chapter three, the entire Westphalian system is built upon an assumption of national origin. Societies guided by a policy of multiculturalism therefore provide indirect support to those communities that can show evidence of a recognized homeland. As the Sikh diaspora was facing a crisis of legitimacy for its traditions, especially among second and third generation Sikhs, the state came to be seen as a solution. The Bluestar Operation seemed to have created a painful transition for many in the Sikh diaspora as it changed from being 'a confident community able to look after its own house' to an 'introspective "victim diaspora"' (Singh Tatla 1999: 207). The consequences were immediately seen in the upsurge of new organizations and their overt attempts to affect the foreign policy of their host states and of other international actors, such as global human rights NGOs

and international organizations. Many of these organizations explicitly supported armed struggle in favour of *Khalistan* by providing funds and sometimes even men to guerrilla groups in Punjab (Gayer 2002: 240–1).[20]

These groups influenced not only activities in Punjab, however, but also those of the central government in Delhi and their host governments in Britain, Canada and the United States. In addition, they have been rather instrumental in providing support for Sikh refugees in Europe and for influencing international public opinion by persuading international NGOs, such as Amnesty International and other human rights agencies, to investigate human rights violations in Punjab. The extent to which the Sikh pro-*Khalistani* diaspora has been successful in getting support from international public opinion is less clear, however, especially in Britain and Canada where their *Khalistani* propagators have often been branded fundamentalists and terrorists.

In comparison, the Sikh diaspora's lobbying in favour of an independent *Khalistan* has been more successful in the United States. This may have to do with the easy access of minority groups to domestic and global media, which provides a strong base for any committed diaspora with transnational aims (Gayer 2002). Sikh lobbyists have also persuaded US Congress members to link US aid to India to human rights abuses in Punjab and to support the issue of self-determination (Singh Tatla 1999). In doing this *Khalistan* is being imagined as a secular Punjabi state based upon the principles of human rights and social justice, rather than being seen as a religious theocracy (Shani 2002). Hence, instead of being detached from the state-centric world, '*Khalistani* militants of the diaspora have constantly interacted with it, lobbied it, and initiated new domestic and new diplomatic policies, either on the host or home state side' (Gayer 2002: 246).

The globalization of identity has, in other words, been a defining feature of the Sikh diaspora after the attack on the Golden Temple (the Operation Bluestar) as the Khalistanis have managed to provide the Sikhs with a global voice. However, as Gayer (2002: 246) has noted, there exists a big gap between the 'diasporic politics of the homeland and homeland politics'. The Khalistan movement was quite limited in Punjab to start with, even at the height of its crisis, and it is slowly fading away among many Punjabi Sikhs in India. This pattern supports Gayer's (2002: 247) thesis that it may be easier to globalize a local voice than localizing a global one. In the case of the Sikhs of the Punjab this had a lot to do with the lack of any explicit significant abject-other that could be blamed for the course of events. This was, as discussed below, related to the absence of any clear Chosen Traumas on which to build primordialist chains of anger and hate. Furthermore, in contrast to the rather united voice coming from overseas Sikhs, there was not one unanimous belief in the importance of an independent Khalistan in Punjab. Instead, the issue of nationhood was blurred as nation and religion remained separate entities among many Punjabi Sikhs, even after the attack on the Golden Temple.

In comparison, the homeland issue in the diaspora had to be connected to religious identity in order to affect the multicultural politics of the host societies and

their increasing emphasis on the politics of recognition. The diaspora's 'significant other' was in many ways reduced to the 'majority people' of the host society and 'their' governments. Despite Punjab being dramatically affected by globalization, the consequences were not the same in Punjab as in the diaspora. As we will see in the two final sections of this chapter, there was in Punjab an absence of direct hostility against the Hindus and, despite the history of the partition and other historic events, there were clear difficulties in finding Chosen Traumas or Glories on which to build primordial chains of events.

The absence of xenophobic hostility against the Hindus

It would be hard to overstate the feeling of subordination that characterized the Sikh community in the face of the assault on the Golden Temple complex (the Operation Bluestar) in 1984. Hardly a Sikh I interviewed could be more in agreement on any one single issue than the fact that Indira Gandhi and the central government had completely disregarded the feelings of the Sikhs as it shot its way through the temple, killing not only Bhindranwale and his followers but also several hundred pilgrims. The attack caused unprecedented convulsions in the whole Sikh community all over the world and, as noted by many, men who were formerly quite secular suddenly started growing their beards and seeking baptism into the Khalsa.[21]

Even moderate Sikhs hence expressed an exceptional feeling of agreement in condemning the military assault on the Golden Temple. Hindus, at the same time, tended to be equally fervent in their defence of the necessity of the action. As expressed by two of my informants, one Sikh and one Hindu:

> The Bluestar massacre could have been avoided. It was a catastrophe. The 6th of June is a holiday – they should have called off the operation long before and let people out.
>
> (interview with a male Jat Sikh farmer outside Amritsar)

> Indira Gandhi could not have prevented the operation. The terror was so prevalent in the Punjab state at that time and I think she tried to do the right thing but there was no alternative left. I think the government waited enough time for the public to come out, the government didn't start action until late at night.
>
> (interview with a 30-year-old Khatri Hindu in Amritsar)

The polarization was captured by a Punjabi Hindu journalist who stated that: 'Punjab's tragedy is that there are no Punjabis any more in Punjab – only Sikhs and Hindus' (quoted in Wallace 1989: 459). There was also a rash of desertions from the Indian Armed Forces, in which Sikhs have always served disproportionately. And many who had previously regarded Bhindranwale as an extremist and a terrorist began to think of him as a heroic defender (a martyr) of a Sikhism that was now under attack by the central government (Mahmood 1996).

What all these factors suggest is that a number of contextual factors, such as perceived or real structural marginalization, discrimination, subordination and existential threat, may be necessary to produce in-group homogenization. As such, they pose a challenge to the assumption that culture is a relatively stable phenomenon and an aggregation of shared orientations. Instead, the homogenization of group members, the construction of stereotypes and intergroup discrimination, is a group response to a threatened social identity. It is a way to securitize subjectivity in the face of threatening challenges. The move from a personal definition of identity to a social, all-comprehensive one, involves a shift in self-categorization as individuals now view in-group differentiation as being much less than intergroup differences.[22]

As manifest in the aftermath of Operation Bluestar and the assassination of Indira Gandhi in December of 1984, it was not the work of the Sikhs alone to construct a perception of a homogeneous Sikh community. After the assassination, anti-Sikh mobs went on the rampage in Delhi and other cities, killing anything from two thousand people (Government of India) to six thousand (Civil Liberties Union). Many of these killings were clearly committed with the full knowledge of the Indian police, who either refused to interfere as Sikhs were being massacred or joined hands with the rioters. It has been demonstrated in some detail that the killings were not the work of ordinary Hindus, but rather that it was a product of the Congress politicians who, with the help of the state machinery, carried out the massacres (see AIFODR 1987).

Sikh insecurity as a consequence of the riots led to an outpouring of about 50,000 Sikhs from other areas to Punjab, and refugee camps were established for about 2,000 Sikhs who had lost their homes or who felt generally unsafe (Wallace 1989). Despite the threat and indignation of Sikhs at this juncture, the anticipated reaction from Punjab did not come. The Hindu minorities in the villages of Punjab were not harmed at all, and even if tension increased in major cities like Amritsar and Patiala, actual attacks on either community was mostly a politically instigated phenomenon. As some of my informants told me:

> During the conflict period only the terrorists attacked the non-Sikh families, we don't have any grudge against any Hindu families or other non-Sikh families.
>
> (a 34-year-old male Sikh farmer near Amritsar)

> There was a lot of police brutality against the Sikhs in the countryside and in the cities and a large number of kidnappings. The police wanted to protect the Hindus, but no close friendships changed because of the conflict. Not during, neither after the conflict.
>
> (a male Sikh businessman in Amritsar, belonging to the Arora caste)

> A lot of Hindu families protected the Sikhs even in Delhi. Perhaps they knew it was the Congress who was behind the attacks.
>
> (a male Jat farmer in a village outside Patiala)

Instead, it seems rather clear that the Sikhs were made into a threat by the central government at the same time as the central government (viewed as representing the Hindus by Sikh militants) was made into a threat to the Sikhs. The fact that Rajiv Gandhi constantly emphasized the theme of unity and integrity of India during the election campaign that followed, only added fuel to an already tense situation. Indirectly he even seemed to justify the massacres by statements like:'When a great tree falls, the mother earth shakes'[23] (quoted in AIFODR, 1987).

For many these were code words for the Sikh secessionist threat in Punjab. The alleged threat also received dramatic visual representation in an omnipresent election poster of Mrs. Gandhi delivering a speech, in which she stated that: 'Whenever I will die, every drop of my blood will make India strong, and will keep alive a united India' (quoted in Wallace 1989). The fact that the Sikhs were presented as a secessionist threat had repercussions also inside the Sikh community and within a few years a well-organized separatist movement was being formed in Punjab. At an assembly of Sikhs in Amritsar there was a decision taken to establish a Panthic Committee of five men who would become leaders of the Sikh community. On April 29, 1986, this committee made a formal declaration in favor of an independent Sikh state of Khalistan. They also sanctioned the use of arms to achieve their objectives through the Khalistan Commando Force and various other guerrilla organizations, including the Khalistan Liberation Army, the Babbar Khalsa International, the Bhindranwale Tigers, the Sikh Student Federation, and the Khalistan National Army (Mahmood 1996). On July 25, the same year, Khalistani terrorists massacred every clean shaven passenger on a bus, thus heightening the existing tensions. The threat to ordinary Sikhs and Hindus now came from two sides: from communal terrorists on the one hand and from repressive police forces on the other.

In my interviews with Sikhs in Punjab I was constantly told about the 'injured' Sikh pride as a result of the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984. It would be close to impossible to discuss or analyze self-conceptions and group definitions of the Sikhs, however, without putting the Sikh perspective into the larger Indian picture. The dream of the creation of a uniform and homogeneous Indian nation – where all discrimination was to be erased through Indianization – has proved to be a myth. Instead, various patterns involving a dominant majority and more or less subordinate minorities prevail, regardless of official claims to the contrary. As argued by Dipankar Gupta (1985): 'The tragedy of the Punjab today is not the making of the Punjab alone. The entire nation is party to it and is implicated by definition in the emergence of a new minority consciousness among the Sikhs'. During the 1980s there was thus a feeling of alienation and hurt pride in the Sikh community, but it was far from a simple projection of the self's unwanted traits onto the Hindus – the majority group. Rather, people in the many Sikh dominated villages displayed a combination of shame and fear in the face of the terrorists and plain anger and injured pride in relation to the central government and the police force. As every village Sikh seemed to be considered a potential terrorist, it should come as no surprise that they felt discriminated against by the majority.

But the majority represented the state, not fellow Hindu villagers. Even in cities of Punjab, where tension at times was high, Sikh and Hindu scheduled caste members seemed to avoid being identified with the conflict going on between Hindu and Sikh communal leaders. As argued by two Sikh villagers:

> For us the real oppression we face is not from the other community. 80 percent of the youth are without jobs. We consider our identity more as Scheduled Castes than as Sikh and Hindu. /.../ Whatever government comes, they never deal with the real problems of Balmikis. We do not like the disturbance of peace that has been going on. Most of us are daily wage earners. When there is curfew for days on end, the daily wage earners are reduced to pauperism.
>
> (quoted in AIFODR, 1987)

> Bhindranwale was no good, he was only looking after the welfare of the Jat Sikhs, the upper class, and he never paid any attention to the life of the poor.
>
> (a 32-year-old male Sikh carpenter, belonging to a scheduled caste)

The feelings of alienation that prevailed in the countryside were mainly to be found among marginalized Sikh youth, both educated and less educated.[24] The extent to which they were available for mobilization had to do with their self-perceptions in regard to status and future prospects. But also in relation to how they conceived of their possibilities to affect the current situation. As they could see few educational or occupational opportunities, they were ripe for mobilization by the terrorists. ‘The weapons and motorcycles of the hit squads symbolized a new social freedom, desired life style, and enhanced self-esteem’ (Wallace 1989: 458). As argued by many of my interview subjects:

> they [described as ‘misled youth’] had a chance to make 5,000 rupees a day through looting or kidnapping, rather than 300 – it was money, not religion that made most of them join the militants.
>
> (interview with a male Jat farmer in a village near Amritsar)

> Religion and unemployment were the most important factors for joining the militants. Some also joined because they wanted to take revenge – either for relatives killed in the Bluestar Operation or for being harassed by the police
>
> (interview with a male Arora Sikh in Amritsar).

As the latter quote shows, the role of police brutality played an important part in what Harish Puri (1989) has called the formation of a ‘siege psychosis’. Many Sikhs would sympathize with the terrorists only as a response to the frequent attacks, suspicions and arbitrary arrests by the police.

> The police played a major role in disturbing the situation here and they forced the people to cut their beards and fathers to rape their daughters. They wanted to get their message across to Bhindranwale that the police would continue to do these acts unless he surrendered.
>
> (interview with a 23-year-old Sikh villager near Amritsar)

The emphasis on martyrdom and the Sikh 'warrior' tradition may have given some extra fuel to the situation, but it had, in my opinion, little to do with either the fact that people turned to militarism or with the fact that they were sympathetic to the demands of the militants.

> It was unemployment and police brutality that aggravated the tensions of the conflict, not this sentiment of Sikhs that they are warriors or heroes. In fact Sihkism is one of the kindest religions.
>
> (interview with a 35-year-old male farmer, belonging to the Kamboh caste near Amritsar)

> Sacrifice and bravery had nothing to do with the increase in militancy. Not even the young have martyrdom in mind. They were not mature persons and they joined because there were a lot of temptations and people on the fields were telling them they could become martyrs, but it was said with the mind not with the heart.
>
> (interview with a 40-year-old male Jat Sikh outside Amritsar)

On the whole, however, there was a change in the 1980s as to what it meant to be a Sikh. In many ways, Sikhs felt alienated from mainstream India in general; the youth felt alienated from opportunities in the secular (economic) sector of the society; Sikhs not living in Punjab were made increasingly aware of their minority status and Sikhs living abroad suddenly felt stronger religious ties to the Indian based Sikh community. Processes of modernization and globalization, particularly as manifest in the effects of the green revolution and in diaspora politics, hence added to the feelings of alienation. As argued by Madanjit Kaur (1991), discrimination may involve political and legal barriers, but they always involve social and economic barriers. From an intergroup perspective, income disparities had increased between landowners and the landless labourers and the fast rate of urbanization threw large numbers of rural people into inhospitable urban settings. Unemployment, as noted earlier, was rising and compatible jobs were rare. Together they resulted in unfulfilled expectations and unrealistic aspirations, which shattered in confrontation with the existing realities, thus generating conflict. State intervention in a number of issues created further discrimination (see Puri 1989). Hence, state encouragement of fundamentalist elements in the struggle against Akali Dal and the lack of sincere willingness to achieve a negotiated settlement with the Akali leadership, added to the general perception of unfair treatment by the central government.

> Congress was not a good party, it was dictating the terms most of the time. Indira and Rajiv Gandhi have never thought of the welfare of the Sikhs.
>
> (46-year-old male Sikh in a village near Amritsar)

> By the efforts of the Congress it started and it ended. The creator and the destroyer is the same.
>
> (42-year-old male Jat Sikh rice mill owner near Patiala)

> Both Bhindranwale and the Congress were involved in creating the conflict – people were lost. Sikhs were discussing the conflict among Sikhs only and Hindus among Hindus only – there was no discussion across communities. Political leaders can always exploit a political situation.
>
> (interview with a male Sikh farmer near Patiala)

The indiscriminate humiliation of all Sikhs passing through Haryana to Delhi during the 1982 Asian Games by the police intensified such feelings. To this should be added the in-group feeling of being discriminated against by the centre in regards to the Chandigarh issue and the issue of river water, always crucial to Punjab's agricultural development, which the central government wanted to share with other water-poor states through the construction of canals.

> The conflict started because of demands of water irrigation and that Chandigarh should belong to Punjab. It was a joint effort by Akali and Congress – they exploited the situation which led to the conflict. /…/ Khalistan doesn't mean anything to me. But more power should be given to the states so they don't have to go to the central government all the time. It is so humiliating.
>
> (interview with a male Sikh chemist store owner in Amritsar, belonging to the Baroda caste)

> More power should be given to the state government. We should be provided water and be allowed to sell our own produce for export.
>
> (interview with a male villager belonging to the Kamboh caste near Patiala)

There was little feeling that the centre was in any way either accommodating or direct in its communication tactics, but neither were the terrorists in many Sikhs' opinions. The total number of civilian killings by the militants rose from 63 in 1985 to 2,467 in 1990 and 2,591 in 1991 (Puri 1992: 7). This increase in killings made people more fearful than supportive of the terrorists. Hence, there was increasing alienation in relation to both the government and the terrorists, but only marginally towards the Hindus in general – at least in the villages. However, the fact that the predominant Hindu communalism was directed against the Sikh community left the Sikhs with a feeling of being discriminated against on a religious basis. This relationship between religion and

politics was further exploited by both the government and the terrorists. In fact, a thirteen point manifesto launched by one of the terrorist groups, the Khalistan Commando Force, made the connection explicit by establishing religious rules to be followed by a Sikh in a Khalistani state. They warned that,

> (t)here is a conspiracy by the Hindu society to finish the Sikh nation, to addict Sikh youth to intoxicants, and drive them on to the path of evil. There are many more conspiracies to defame the Sikhs, from which the Panth must remain cautious. Whosoever does not shun the social evils listed below shall be awarded capital punishment.
>
> (quoted in AIFODR, 1987)

Included in the list was anything from threats against distilling and selling liquor to threats against trimming one's beard, to more general rules for how men and women should be dressed. Sikhs were hence constantly reminded of their religious separateness, both from the centre (in form of every day harassment and accusations of secessionism) and from extremist groups.

This, I will argue, was the main reason for the prevailing feeling of Sikh separateness on both a personal and a collective level. Self-conceptions and group definitions (or context-bound and context-traversing identities) overlapped only in response to the broader political and social reality of being selected out for prejudice and discrimination. However, the acknowledgment of a Sikh separateness does not mean that all Sikhs internalized the events in exactly the same way. Bhindranwale may have succeeded in mobilizing and politically directing Sikhs in a religious movement, but not all Sikhs or even a majority of the Sikhs. Similarly, the fact that the Sikhs felt under attack from two directions does not mean that all Sikhs responded in a uniform fashion. Some would turn to the militants, some would feel helpless in the face of violence and constant fear, while some would favour a political solution and sometimes even hard-core tactics to put a stop to the conflict.

> The police atrocities made me sympathetic towards the militants. There were a lot of people joining from this village. Some of them got killed and some of them now live normal lives. We still want a separate land of Khalistan … because this is a very prosperous state … independence will be the only solution.
>
> (32-year-old male Sikh carpenter in a village near Amritsar, belonging to a backward caste)

> During the conflict nobody dared to go outside in the evening. We were afraid of police torture but we were also afraid of the terrorists. The terrorists didn't even spare their own relatives and sometimes they would kill cousins or ask for money from them
>
> (46-year-old male Sikh from a village near Amritsar)

> The police were doing a good job during the conflict. It was a very good solution and we are now prospering again.
> (a 33-year-old female Jat Sikh in a village near Amritsar).

The Sikh 'warrior mentality' thesis is hence rejected in favour of a thesis that explains, not only how identities are mobilized and manipulated through contextual politics, but also how they are internalized at a personal level. This is the aim of a thick signifier approach, which takes into account the combination of structural and psychological motivations for understanding how identity is constructed and identity politics is played out. In the final section I will give some further thought to the reasons behind political mobilization and identity affiliation among the Sikhs in Punjab.

Globalization and the lack of 'Chosen Traumas'

To fully discuss and give credit to such reasons we need to discuss how the effects of globalization are connected to instrumentalist aspects of identity mobilization. In the Sikh case in particular, it is important to spell out how electoral politics and conflictual centre-region relations have shaped identity polarization. As many have noted[25] it would indeed be difficult to explain the conflict in Punjab in isolation from electoral politics. The Rajiv-Longowal accord (or the Punjab accord), reached in 1985, is a telling example of how politics from above affected the situation below. It was an attempt by Rajiv Gandhi after the Congress victory in the 1984 elections to salvage the Punjabi crisis by signing an accord with the Akali leader, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. The accord addressed the major grievances by the Sikh community, such as the issue of Chandigarh, water irrigation issues, rehabilitation of Sikhs who deserted the army following Operation Bluestar and an inquiry into the killings of Sikhs in the Delhi riots. Despite the fact that Longowal was murdered soon thereafter, the climate was set for normal, non-violent political processes. Extremist support clearly waned as a wave of sympathy, coupled with the popularity of the accord, swept the Akali Dal into power in elections to Punjab's state assembly on 25 September 1985. Appeals to communal harmony were given substance with the election of three Hindus and one Muslim on the Akali Dal ticket (see Wallace 1989, Puri 1986, Singh Tatla 1999).

However, the fact that the Rajiv-Longowal Accord failed to be implemented in any serious way, together with increased Akali factionalism, soon had repercussions in the wider society. Terrorism again gained momentum, killing some 500–700 people in 1985–6, and in May 1987 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi suddenly imposed Presidential Rule in the state, followed by dissolution of the Punjab Assembly and Operation Black Thunder in May 1988 (Wallace 1989, Puri 1989, 1994). The fact that the Sikh community reacted less negatively to this operation, which again involved clearing out of terrorists from the Golden Temple, had to do with the openness of the action and the use of minimum force.

> Operation Bluestar should not have occurred at any time because it hurt the Sikh masses. It should have been operated like the Black Thunder operation a few years later when they waited out the militants.
>
> (a male Arora Sikh in Amritsar)

Perhaps if Operation Bluestar had been conducted similarly, the increase in Sikh militancy and the formation of a Sikh 'minority consciousness' could have been avoided.

What happened instead, following the Black Thunder operation, was a Punjab that came almost entirely in the hands of the security forces with extraordinary discretionary powers. Between 1987 and 1992 the state was under Presidential Rule, with Amnesty International reports describing these years as characterized by a dismantled legal framework, disappearances, secret detention, anonymous arrests, extrajudicial killings and systematic practices of terror. As noted earlier, the people of Punjab were squeezed between the security forces, on the one hand, and increased militancy on the other. With more than 15,000 dead Sikhs as a result of the clashes, the Congress returned to power in 1992, largely because the Akalis boycotted the polls that year. A fragile sense of democracy was restored, even as security forces continued to chase Sikh militants, and by the summer of 1995 a kind of normalcy was brought back to the region as the Akali Dal was again allowed to function as a party. In 1997 a coalition of Akali Dal and the BJP was voted into power, headed by Parkash Singh Badal (e.g. Deol 2000, Singh Tatla 1999).

Within this process of electoral politics and tension between the centre and the regions, Sikh elites manipulated interpretations of the past as they were seeking access to the state. Hence, since the 1980s there has been a thriving debate about the 'national status' of the Sikhs (Singh Tatla 1999). However, it was only as a consequence of the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984 and the destruction of the Akal Takhat, that the actual struggle for a Sikh state arose. This struggle, however, did not include all Punjabi Sikhs and there was a great difference between Sikhs in Punjab and diaspora Sikhs, as noted earlier. This has certain implications for understanding identity construction as being purely a process of instrumentalist manipulation. It is only possible to manipulate and mobilize on the basis of a (constructed) single identity pattern if such a pattern resonates with the audience. This, in turn, requires a more or less uniform audience in almost perfect agreement on a specific history, where certain events, places and historic discourses are able to work at an emotional level as Chosen Traumas or Glories. For a 'successful' securitization of subjectivity – the ability to perceive oneself as an essentialist entity, as discussed in chapter two – one needs to secure feelings of fear and discrimination in a perceived 'objective' reality, a linear history where each place, person and event is perceived as having actually existed and where there is a clear notion of who the 'other' is.

What we saw in Punjab were in many ways attempts towards such a discursive creation of an 'other' through political rhetoric aimed at maintaining and reinventing a primordialist one-dimensional Sikh identity. The question is, how-

ever, how successful were such tactics? From a Sikh perspective, it is certainly true that the Sikhs have become more aware of their minority status due to the mobilization of the conflict. They are no longer automatically guaranteed entrance into the Hindu society as the kind of privileged ‘other’ that they used to be. However, if the Sikh community has been transformed on a religious basis – if they have become more religious because of the conflict – is less clear. They have certainly been defined as more fundamentalist by outsiders, but that seems to be more of a case of stereotyping based on a minority group’s actions (the militants) than characteristic for the entire Sikh community. However, the fact that more Sikhs make an effort to outwardly manifest their Sikh identity may have had personal repercussions in the religious sphere. Hence it is possible that religious aspects of everyday life have become personalized in response to an increased feeling of Sikhism as a threatened religion.

In this regard it is clear that factors of injured pride, alienation, fear and feelings of discrimination were present among the Sikhs in Punjab and elsewhere during the 1980s. However, while a subjective perception of discrimination existed among the Sikhs of Punjab, there was no clear ‘Chosen Trauma’ to rely on for generating and sustaining xenophobic hostility against the Hindus. The conflict with Muslim rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries set a pattern of hostility between Sikhs and Muslims rather than between Sikhs and Hindus. Hence partition could not, as has been the case in Hindu-Muslim antagonism, work as a source of reference for the Sikhs of Punjab experiencing the traumatic effects of globalization, modernity and party politics.

Furthermore, the notion of Khalistan is by no means a simple and straightforward process, despite extensive discussions about a Sikh homeland in Punjab and abroad. As noted earlier, the establishment of the Dal Khalsa in Chandigarh in 1978 on the pledge to achieve an independent Sikh state does not diminish the fact that the actual Khalistan movement was launched by Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan from abroad. This has led observers to argue that the support for Khalistan came from abroad and there was no real foundation among a majority of the Punjabi Sikhs for an independent Khalistani state (see e.g. Jeffrey 1994 and Akbar 1985). This would imply the lack of another mythical or real point of reference that could have worked as a ‘Chosen Trauma’, as well as a desire for the return of lost territory. Also, as argued by both Pettigrew (1995) and Oberoi (1994), territory has never been a focal point for Sikh theology. which makes it hard to equate peoplehood and nationality in the case of Sikhism. Instead, nationalism and religion were used separately and political leaders failed to link them in a manner that could have served to alleviate feelings of alienation and fear as a result of rapid socio-economic changes.[26] Neither were political leaders able to link the two in a way that accentuated the differences between Sikhs and Hindus, which meant that no clear abject-other was constructed that could have directed many Sikhs’ feelings of insecurity.

Here it is also important to emphasize that, even in cases when we can find a number of mythical or real religious themes that could have worked as Chosen Traumas or Glories, the outcome is not necessarily consistent. A religious her-

itage is capable of producing a variety of responses, depending on whether it is associated with the devotional, pacifist tradition of Guru Nanak and the five first Gurus, or whether it is linked to the theocratic militancy of Guru Gobind Singh (Chadda 1997: 59). Finally, it is indeed problematic to talk about a Khalsa identity as including all the adherents of the Sikh faith. As noted earlier, the Sikh community is divided in terms of Jats, Khatris, Aroras and Ramgharhias and lower castes of Mazhabis, Adharmi and other scheduled castes and, up until the Bluestar Operation, most lower castes preferred the Congress to the Akali Dal, which they saw as being Jat dominated.

Hence, the lack of a familiar other becoming the despised abject-other questions the bases on which a redefinition of self actually occurred among Punjabi Sikhs in contrast to many diaspora Sikhs. If Kristeva is right that it is only through debasement that the self is reassured of essential difference, then the fact that Hindus were not thoroughly debased may make the claim for heightened religious identity hard to make. Also, it is worth emphasizing that appeals for Khalistan seem to have been only sporadically supported. This in itself appears to have deprived Sikh nationalists of any clear 'Chosen Trauma,' which could have served as a foundation from which to redefine, reinterpret and re-evaluate the ongoing conflict. Without such a 'Chosen Trauma', it is unlikely that a common point of reference, a rallying ground, could be found, as memory and imagination needs a mythical support structure in order to redefine self and identity.

6 Globalization, modernity and the power of Hindu nationalism

As late as June 1991, India was described as 'the most self-sufficient non-communist country in the world'.[1] Considering that India was open to most other influences in the world, this isolation from the international economy must be regarded as quite remarkable at a first glance. It had, however, its origins in the late nineteenth century's economic criticism of colonial exploitation. Ideologically, the free market had few proponents among Indian nationalist elites and instead the regulation of the market by political forces was regarded as essential. This market-resistance had a number of sources: patriarchal and traditional Indian models of authority; Gandhi's thoughts about *swadeshi* (literally: of the country by itself)[2]; patriotism in relation to the homeland and its products, Nehru's and the Indian left's socialist views; the fear of foreign competition among Indian corporations and their hopes for protectionist politics; and, perhaps most importantly, the awareness that colonialism had succeeded as a result of trade in the form of the East India Company rather than through armed invasion (Khilnani 2002).

In May 1991, India went through an economic crisis, precipitated by a debt increase during the 1980s due to an increasing budget deficit. This coincided with higher costs for foreign debt and imported goods. The result was a classic balance of payments crisis in which the Indian government was about to suspend debt payment. Instead, the government turned to the IMF for assistance which, as a consequence, provided the new government of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with an opportunity to liberalize the state's hold of the economy. As a result of this liberalization, foreign direct investment increased from virtual insignificance in 1990 to 2–3 billion dollars by the end of the 1990s. Portfolio investments have increased by 1 to 2 billion dollars a year and in the mid-1990s the GNP had reached 6 to 7 per cent, but by 2001 was down to 5 per cent (Kapila 2002: 44). These changes have created a 'new middle class', consisting of around 150 million Indians or fifteen per cent of the population. Numerically this group is not very large, but it has great economic power, created by the Green Revolution in North India, the 'White Revolution' in the milk districts in the Western states, and by emigrant funding in the South. This growth has favoured the urban population in particular, as well as being partial and uneven in many other respects. For example, between 1991 and 1996 the

three most successful states, New Delhi, Maharashtra and Gujarat, with 15 per cent of the population, received 40 per cent of foreign direct investment, while the least successful states, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, with 32 per cent of the population, received only 3.5 per cent. And although general poverty may be decreasing,[3] several 100 millions of people remain in this category and social inequality seems to have increased (Echeverri-Gent 1999, Khilnani 2002).

The fact that India has been spared the social turmoil experienced by other rapidly liberalizing countries does not, in other words, imply that liberalization has been without social costs. Many provincial cities have experienced a more chauvinistic nationalism and an intensified caste-based politics as a result of the struggle over resources and power. Public debate has become increasingly pre-occupied with the question of what and who is 'Indian', reflecting what Sunil Khilnani (2002) describes as an 'eroticized over-identity' crisis – a pre-occupation with self-identification that 'borders on erotic appeal' (a theme returned to below). Within this process we can see at least two opposing forces that serve to reinforce such an appeal. One is the aggressive nationalism that is connected to rising Hindu chauvinism and is represented by those who wish to replace India's soft definition of a state with one that is culturally and ethnically purified. Such a definition would have only one Indian identity, characterized by a strong state defended by nuclear warheads. The decision by the previously BJP-led government to abstain from small states' development aid goes together with this 'strong-state' approach. The other force, as described by Khilnani (2002), is more difficult to grasp and can be found in the increasing romanticization and exoticization of everything Indian among the rising new middle classes, such as the increasing taste for different regional cuisine, 'ethnic' fashion, the appetite for distant Indian holiday places, astrology, and 'vastuu' (an Indian version of Feng Shui).

This chapter is focused upon this *process of becoming* an 'Indian' in the light of globalization and economic reform, particularly as this process has become expressed in Hindu nationalism. Of specific interest is how, and the extent to which, definitions of who is a 'Hindu' are juxtaposed with Hinduized definitions of who the 'Muslims' are. Although I am interested in how subjectivity becomes securitized also among Muslims and other minority groups, this will be investigated only in relation to the increasing securitization process among many Hindus as they search for a stable and secure identity. As discussed earlier, this decision has only to do with limitations of space and the need for analytical focus, not because Muslims' and other groups' self-definitions are unimportant. Hindu nationalism, although complex and multifaceted, supports the notion that religion and nationalism, in combination, act as powerful responses to the individual quest for ontological security in a rapidly changing world.

Divided selves – the contestation of Hindu identity

Despite the fact that Hindu nationalism is built upon the notion of a homogenous national Hinduism – a 'natural' Hindu identity, there is, as discussed earlier, noth-

ing 'natural' or essential in such constructions. Instead, it is clear that many features of Hindu philosophy are also shared by Muslim, Sikh and Jain communities (among others), implying that they are not exclusively Hindu. Although many low-caste Hindus have converted to Islam and Sikhism to avoid their status of untouchability, it has proved difficult to entirely erase their lower-caste status even in Muslim and Sikh communities. Having said this, however, it is equally clear that there is no monolithic Hindu culture. When people speak of Hinduism, they generally refer to upper-caste Brahminic culture and domination; a domination that is often resisted by Dalits and many backward castes.

Similarly, there is no singular Muslim culture. As argued by Oommen (1994), the talk of some Muslim leaders and *ulema* (teachers) of a 'pure Islamic' identity is a theological myth. Even the urban Muslim elite of North India represent a complex culture with an indisputable mark of indigenous Indian influences. The fact that many groups in the Indian society also assert their regional identity – like Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, and others, makes the notion of singular, integral identities even less comprehensible. As one of my interview subjects phrased it:

> I'm an Indian but I am also a Gujarati and a Thakur[4]. The caste system is good and should be kept because of weddings and marriages – and also because of the kinds of respect people give to certain castes. How can you give that kind of respect if you don't know somebody's caste?
>
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ahmedabad)

The latter part of this quote alludes to the increasing significance of the politicization of caste politics where caste often takes on an openly secular form of organization. These can be either 'associations' of caste members in terms of anything from recreational bodies to reform clubs and pressure groups, or they may present themselves as some forms of caste 'institutions' that have a broader base covering districts or even states. They can also consist of what Kothari (1995: 20–2; see also Gupta 2002) refers to as caste 'federations,' containing several castes that at times are portrayed as socially homogenous, while they, at other times, represent only a common objective. Caste in such formations departs from previous ascriptive understandings of the term to be oriented towards securing economic, social or political benefits from the state. Despite this recent inclination towards large-scale caste federations, it should be noted that caste identities and alignments vary greatly between regions, thus making national-level caste-based organization difficult (Basu 2000). This is not to deny that caste consciousness, similar to other identity-based awareness, has increased during the last decade.

Together with the demands of globalization, such increases in the assertions of identity and its political mobilization reflect two significant contradictory trends that have affected the Indian state during the decade of the 1990s. Globalization, as discussed in chapter one, has meant the withdrawal of the state from welfare activities, the downsizing of manpower, and the curbing of fiscal deficits. At the same time, however, increasing democratization and electoral competition has led to an upsurge from below making demands that the state cannot ignore (Pai

2002). To this can be added the decentralization of power to the village panchyats.[5] Such decentralization has empowered the village communities and given them authority in many areas of economic, social and cultural developmental administration. Women have furthermore received 33 per cent reservations in the council of the village panchyats, giving them increased power in the formulation and implementation of policies (Singh 2000: 62–3).

Much of this ‘identity fragmentation’ stands in sharp contrast to the homogenizing version of Hindu nationalism portrayed by the BJP and the *Sangh Parivar* in general. The aim of the *Hindutva* movement has been to construct a chain of events where a glorified past is connected to the present and where it justifies future actions – it is a nationalist homogenizing narrative that is deeply rooted in religious discourse. In the representation of the past there are no sharp boundaries between ‘religious fiction’ and ‘material facts’, as often argued by empiricist historians. Instead, archaeological research is often used to fit the pre-determined narrative by making them into ‘hard facts’ (van der Veer 1996: 142–5). The notion that cultural nationalism is positive and real is based on two interconnected assumptions. The first is that Hindu nationalism is not a modern phenomenon in India. Instead, its provenance is held to go back to Vedic times and it is therefore enmeshed with the history and culture of the Hindu ‘race’. The second assumption is that the nationalist ideology generated by the anti-colonial movement was negative in character, and confined to opposing colonialism rather than affirming a positive Hindu identity. Both assumptions, as argued by Panikkar (1997: xv), betray an ahistorical view of Indian nationalism and mainly reflects a continued call for majoritarian nationalism.

Hindu scholarship divided: the (re)interpretation of history

This battle for India’s history is also being fought in elementary and high schools. In those states controlled by the BJP, textbooks have been written to glorify the ‘Hindu past’, to revile the policies of the ‘Muslim invaders’, to rename Indian cities and regions (such as Bombay to Mumbai), and to revise the relationship between Hindu religion, national identity and citizenship (see Smith 1993). The role of language has been significant in this process, as noticed in the early nineties when All-India Radio sent out a directive to its employees regarding the use of Sanskrit. Newspaper translators in the respective languages, including Hindi, Urdu and Kashmiri, were ordered to use Sanskrit for certain terms, insisting on Sanskrit being a secular language (Duara 1991). For minorities, such as the Muslims, the closeness between Sanskrit and Brahmanism left much to be desired in terms of minority protection.

Historians at the left-leaning Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and elsewhere have been persistent in their attempts to discredit Hindu nationalist accounts, publishing pamphlets, books and newspaper articles.[6] In doing this, however, there has been a tendency among some scholars[7] to deconstruct the historical or archaeological base of Hindu nationalist history-writing by appealing to actual evidence and proof (van der Veer 1996), thus not challenging a ‘mythical’

discourse through engagement. Some of these scholars, such as Panikkar (1991), a neo-Nehru secularist, have insisted that we must differentiate between 'faith' and 'facts' and only engage when 'facts' are being contested. Neo-Gandhian cultural nationalists, like Ashis Nandy and T.N. Madan, have argued that such a differentiation is not possible and have instead pointed to the need for properly understanding pre-colonial religious culture (Jurgensmeyer 1996; see also Desai 1999, 2002, Nanda 2004, Smith 1996). Nandy has insisted on making a clear distinction between the *Hindutva* type of political ideology and Hinduism, where the latter is regarded as a 'faith and a way of life' that permeates Indian culture. Madan has made similar claims in his hopes that traditional culture can become the basis for a new Indian unity, and Partha Chatterjee has joined this culturalist discourse by launching a new historical nationalist project to 'fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western' (Juergensmeyer 1996: 133; see also Desai 2002, Nanda 2004).[8]

This 'internal' debate between the neo-Nehru secularist historians and the neo-Gandhians may not always be as distant from Hindu nationalism as it would like to be. By insisting on disproving RSS/VHP claims, the neo-secularists have difficulties in staying away from the hegemonic narrative provided by the RSS/VHP, a narrative that relies on a 'mythical' discourse. The neo-Gandhians, on the other hand, run the risk of glorifying and establishing *a* past that can be verified or falsified in their search for continuity of a collective memory (Smith 1996: 2; see also Juergensmeyer 1996).

All these groups of Indian historians have been confronted by a number of constructivist historians, such as Brass, Juergensmeyer, Oommen and van der Veer, who problematize the construction of knowledge and meaning in order to show how these are always constructed in relation to an other and to discourses of power. The Delhi Historians' Group should also be mentioned in this respect, although some of them may not choose the label 'constructivist'. In this debate contemporary historians disagree on both the historical existence of Hindu and Muslim identities and the extent to which Hindu-Muslim conflict was endemic prior to the nineteenth century. On the one side are those constructivist scholars who argue that Hindu-Muslim consciousness and conflict are basically modern constructions related to the British strategy of 'divide and rule', while on the other side are those primordialist scholars who originate Hindu-Muslim identity and conflict to pre-modern times (Brass 2003: 25–6). As van der Veer argues (1992), this 'internal cultural debate' is not a 'static debate isolated from the larger context of historical change. Hindu nationalism has been strong from the Cow-Protection Movement of the nineteenth century to the present day and it belongs to the mainstream of Indian nationalism. However, there is more than one version of it and these versions have had more or less support at different points in time'. In response to the constructivist scholars' attempts to establish alternative discourses, it is interesting to note how they, similar to constructivist scholars within the Sikh tradition, have been accused of being unpatriotic, of dismantling Indian identity and of destabilizing the foundations of the Indian state. This critique has come from Hindu nationalists both within and outside academia.

Of interest at this point is the extent to which such a 'nationalist' discourse has come to prevail and dominate the Indian political landscape and the role of globalization within this process. As was the case in the previous chapter, it is important to be aware of those socio-economic changes that have taken place in India during the last decade as a result of liberalization policies and to investigate the impact of these on Hindu identity and Hindu nationalism. In other words, we need to explain how, in the light of globalization, various identity patterns came together during the 1990s to account for one dominant religious nationalist identifier.

Liberalization, modernization and the construction of Hindu nationalism

As noted earlier, India has opened up its economy by cutting the restrictions on imports and by its increasing willingness to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI). Structural reforms have been largely carried out in the areas of industry, trade and financial sectors at the expense of other major sectors like agriculture, cooperatives, education, etc. The reforms have predominantly involved substantive deregulation, including free participation by private enterprises, opening up of industry to greater international competition, and disinvestment in selected Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) (Wadhva 2000).[9] In more specific terms the reforms have almost resulted in an abolition of the so called 'License-Permit Raj',[10] with only six groups of industries still being reserved for the public sector. The Indian rupee has also been made convertible for current account transactions and successive governments have increasingly liberalized policies concerning FDIs and made them more investor-friendly. The exchange rate is now largely market determined and the capital market has become more independent. There has been a gradual deregulation of interest rates, direct taxes have been lowered and corporate income taxes have almost reached internationally comparable levels. The supply of consumer goods has risen and the Indian consumer has increasingly received lower prices and better quality of goods. The current accounts deficit stayed well below 2 per cent of GDP during 1993 to 1999, suggesting that the balance of payments situation was unproblematic (Wadhva 2000: 214).

However, the hopes raised by the reforms that India was to become a 'new tiger' were dimmed by the turn of the century. Since 1997 the second round of reforms has been stunted, delayed and abandoned by special interest groups who lost out in the deregulation process and who had become used to restricted markets and protectionist policies. Industrial growth has decelerated in response and export growth fell in 1999 and in 2000 it was yet to recover to the 1992–6 growth rate level.[11] A major obstacle to economic growth has been infrastructure bottlenecks, as well as the large instability and fluctuation in growth rates in agriculture. The latter is largely due to the consistent neglect in allocation of public investment to this sector, together with the limited infusion of new technologies. To this should be added the rise in imports. Despite depreciating the rupee rate,

imports have rapidly increased and the trade deficit rose from US $1,546 million in 1991–2 to US $8,199 million in 1998–9 (Swami 2000: 141).[12] Unemployment continues to be a wide-spread problem in both urban and rural areas, with data from the Planning Commission's Ninth Five Year Plan (1997–2000) showing an unemployment rate in 1997 of 10.45 per cent of the work force. Levels of poverty decreased in the urban areas from 35.29 per cent in 1991 to 33.97 per cent in 1997. However, poverty levels increased during the same period in the rural areas, from 35.04 per cent in 1991 to 38.46 per cent in 1997, implying that the proportion of people below the poverty line rose from 35 per cent to 37 per cent (Swami 2000: 181–204, Ghosh 1999: 119–20). Although these figures are taken from a small sample[13] they seem to confirm the belief that the benefits of the reforms have been greater in urban than rural areas.

In addition to these economic and social effects, the reforms have had a number of political, cultural and psychological effects. What is particularly noticeable from a political perspective is the extent to which globalization and liberalization have affected the Indian democratic structure. Here Prabhat Patnaik (2000: 243–50) discerns three ways in which neo-liberal economic policies have affected and reduced democratic content. The first has to do with the strategy of influencing policy-making and public opinion, where Patnaik argues that a common strategy is to place IMF and World Bank Indian employees in key positions in the economic bureaucracy from which they can implement key policies without explicit mention of any 'conditionalities'. Rather than having an open debate on key economic policies these are often referred to government-appointed expert-groups sympathetic to liberalization who will comment on the benefits of neo-liberal policies. To this should be added the privatization and denationalization of media, research and higher education, with the net result being a reduction of any intellectual base for opposition to neo-liberal policies and to multinational companies (MNCs).

The second factor relates to the creation of conditions whereby differences between alternative political formations disappear. Here Patnaik (2000: 246–7) argues that, due to the risk of frightening international speculators, all political formations tend to converge on the neo-liberal programme, thus denying the people a real democratic choice. The third element can be found in the linkage between forces of globalization in terms of neo-liberal policies and increased fundamentalist and secessionist policies. The de-emphasis on the 'national' and the 'state' in much neo-liberal discourse has opened up for a sub-national consciousness. In secessionist terms, such discourses are visible both among states that have benefited from the reforms (as witnessed in the case of Punjab) as well as those which have suffered (as for instance in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar). In terms of fundamentalism, globalization often becomes associated with deteriorated conditions for the ordinary person, while the rich are becoming both richer and more Westernized in their excessive consumerist patterns. These feelings of 'anti-Western' and 'anti-elite' are often used by fundamentalist forces to mobilize those who feel they have been left out. In relation to the *Hindutva* movement, similar forces of discontent are mobilized, not so much in relation to a domestic elite, but

in relation to a significant ‘other’ – in this case the Muslims, who are singled out as the cause of distress. On the question of whether the close relationship between the BJP and the VHP/RSS could be justified in a secular state, one Hindu male in Ajmer replied that:

> Muslim parties support the Congress and the Backward Castes also support the Congress – so why should not the BJP also have religious grounds?

Within this mobilization process of fundamentalist forces, the discourse has in many ways shifted from the economic sphere to the socio-cultural sphere. However, it is important not to disregard the implicit relationship between the discourse on economic globalization and that of secession or fundamentalism. Hence, there has been great unhappiness and conflict within the *Sangh Parivar* concerning the extent to which even moderate globalization can be ideologically compatible with Hindu nationalism. The RSS established for instance a new *swadeshi*-oriented organization in the 1990s, the *Swadeshi Jagaran Manch* (SJM – Swadeshi Renaissance Organization) as a way to highlight the negative cultural and economic consequences of globalization and unbridled liberalization.[14] The meaning and content of *swadeshi* in RSS/SJM terms has mainly been focused on the cultural sphere but, as it argues against foreign intervention and foresees an India that is increasingly autonomous and encapsulated, it also has political implications (Gillan 2001). As expressed by one RSS representative:

> Why is this country lagging behind, this India which was once hailed as the Golden Bird before foreign invaders discovered her (…) Beggars, that is what we have been reduced to, because we are going with begging bowls before the affluent nations and multinationals.
>
> (R. Singh in *Telegraph*, 4 May 1995, cf. Hansen 1998: 307)

Such terminology differs from official BJP policy. Instead, the BJP has been trying to combine the language of *swadeshi* with deregulation and the opening up of the Indian economy to international forces – often through the use of imprecise and ambiguous language. As former Prime Minister Vajpayee expressed it:

> There is an urgent need to speed up economic reforms. /…/ My government believes in reforms with a human face dictated by the welfare of the largest number of people. In fact, there is no conflict between *swadeshi* and liberalisation. As someone who subscribes to the basic philosophy of *swadeshi*, I believe in liberalisation.
>
> (*Business India*, 22 Mar.–4 Apr. 1999: 54, Gillan 2001: 51–2)

Despite the government’s unwillingness to accept any tension between *swadeshi* and liberalization, there are unmistakable indications that the movement towards cultural change and modernization is resented when it fails to accommodate traditional cultural values of society together with its languages, practices and styles

of life. In this regard there is clear unease within the *Sangh Parivar* family, both within the BJP itself and between the BJP and the RSS as well as within the RSS (Vanaik 1997). On the one hand the BJP needs to reach out and influence the Backward Castes and the Dalits, which means a stronger emphasis on traditional *Hindutva* politics, including a resolute opposition to liberalization, modernization and globalization. This, on the other hand, would alienate a large number of the urban middle classes who currently give the BJP a modernist image and a new legitimacy. In comparison, the RSS is much more reluctant than the BJP to move away from its ideological commitments of Brahminical Hinduism. Hence it is quite hostile to any form of pragmatism and puts great emphasis on the combination of economic and cultural nationalism. As argued by Vanaik (1997: 322): '(t)he values associated with economic liberalism, such as consumerist aspirations, relative unconcern for indigenous values, and dilution of nationalist control and sovereignty, are incompatible with the nationalist commitment that is supposed to guide and inspire RSS cadres'. This emphasis on Brahminical Hinduism does, however, create a tension within the RSS itself as it tries to widen its recruitment areas to include backward castes and Dalits. The modern Dalit movement, in particular, is seeking to fight the caste system and even to eradicate it (see Pai 2002, Vanaik 1997, Rajagopal 2000), thus questioning the very foundation of much RSS ideology.

It is, in other words, difficult to separate the impact of globalization in economic terms from its political and socio-cultural consequences. Culturally, the revolution in media has had profound consequences, not only for creating exceptionally globalized means for cultural interaction but also for strengthening local and regional identities. The radio has become crucial for spreading information and entertainment and reaches 94.5 per cent of the Indian population. Of particular importance is how radio transmission policy-makers have been extremely receptive to the protection of cultural, local and regional interests, where different linguistic and cultural groups have been provided separate air-time. The same thing has happened in television, which covers around 50–60 per cent of the population, as it caters to the interests of minorities, tribal groups and weaker sections of society (Singh 2000). This reception to cultural particulars has occurred at the same time as the rising middle classes have developed a passion for American serials offered by satellite channels. This new passion often goes hand in hand with the acquisition of new consumption habits and, among the urban educated youth, the growth of a Western subculture that celebrates Western style of life.

As Jaffrelot (2002: 138) notices, however, despite the urban middle classes acceptance of certain models of American consumption, 'traditional Indian cooking has not been dethroned by McDonalds; the traditional dress, particularly for women has resisted the western trends in fashion and the cinema industry has made few concessions to the Hollywood model.'[15] In this sense cultural globalization is more a process of fusion and indigenization of cultural impulses from outside than an outright replacement. But in psychological terms there are more profound consequences of the cultural globalization process, which can partly

explain the rise of *Hindutva* politics. As one of my interviewees expressed it when discussing the effects of media:

> TV has affected people in a bad way. We pick up the wrong things from the West like fashion, sex, morality and ways of dressing. In Mahabharata it was a fight for truth. In today's television scenes women are always raped or abused – we learn the bad things rather than the good things.
>
> (interview with a male Hindu driver in Jaipur)

What this response suggests is a psychological contradiction between the preferences among certain societal groups for some kind of Western life style and the pull towards rituals and religious beliefs. 'There is a tremendous growth in youth's commitment to cosmopolitan values, and yet the hold of caste, ethnicity and religion remains intact' (Singh 2000: 123). This is what Pathak (1998) has described as the great cleavage between the middle classes and the downtrodden. This cleavage is often expressed in regards to changes in clothing and fashion – in particular in relation to women's clothing. As such it shows how women's bodies often become a contested domain in the struggle between new and old, between modernity and tradition, and between the secular and the religious state – a theme returned to in the last section of this chapter. In my interviews, this tendency was stressed equally among certain male members of the Muslim and the Hindu communities:

> What I mostly dislike about foreign influences is Western fashion and how it has made Indian women starting to wear Western clothes.
>
> (interview with a 32-year-old Hindu salesman in Ahmedabad)

> Some ideas come in that we just don't want – Western movies are usually shown after 2 am in the morning, but I feel bad about how people are starting to dress and think. This has to do with the emergence of Western culture and how it is affecting Indian youth, especially the girls – a lot of kissing and mooching, a lot of sex. We also see an increase in 'broken' families, in divorces. This has a lot to do with privatization, which makes it difficult to stop – with privatization, people will just think about themselves.
>
> (interview with a 23-year-old Muslim male in Ahmedabad)

With increasing consumerism and media advertising there has been a democratization of media images, 'but no democratization of resources to fulfil the desires intensified by the images' (Pathak 1998: 179). This contradiction between what is available and what is obtainable has affected political violence and has in many places resulted in a growth of counter-Westernization movements. It is a contradiction similar to that between *swadeshi* and modernity, but it works at a psychological level, where the search for securitized subjectivity is focused on cultural confidence – the discovery of the true cultural roots in order to avoid feelings of fragmentation, splitting and uncertainty.

> Modernization is incorrect. Foreign companies come in, first as traders and then they slowly take over the country – just like the British did. Westernization is affecting the Indian culture negatively. There is at least 20 per cent's difference in the way people think now and then. The Indian people are adopting Western ideas; they watch Western films; drugs are coming into the country, and people get confused as to what are their own traditions, their own past.
>
> (interview with a 49-year-old male Brahmin Hindu store owner in Pushkar)

Implicit in these comparisons is the notion of indigenous culture as pure, as the compassionate and tolerant alternative to the rational, aggressive and impersonal West. *Hindutva* politics must be centred on building a unified pan-Indian hegemonic identity that overrides the agglomeration of localized identities if it is to appeal to the new middle classes. This requires a glorification and romanticization of India's past. As persuasively argued by Radhika Desai, the neo-Gandhians have unwittingly supported *Hindutva* politics in this regard.[16] At the same time *Hindutva* politics needs to appease the lower sections of the majority community that feel left out in the modernization process and experience various forms of relative deprivation. As Panikkar (1999) has noted, never before have the disparities between the rich and the poor been so visibly pronounced in both consumer patterns and lifestyle. The idealization and celebration of consumer culture in media only serves to exacerbate feelings of deprivation and frustration.

> Modernization has only been good for certain sections of the population. For the general public it is mostly a reason to feel jealous of other people – modernization works as a reason to match other people's standards. Those who are economically weak have not benefited from modernization.
>
> (interview with a 32-year-old Hindu female shop keeper in Ahmedabad)

Rather than economic rewards, psychological rewards have become the norm in *Hindutva* politics, as expressed in a pride of one's Hinduness. This pride, as Desai (2002: 40) has argued, 'together with the privilege of being mobilized, more or less frequently, often with the tacit assumption of the state, for symbolic or violent demonstrations – form the very substance of the relationship between the propertied classes and certain sections of the disadvantaged'.

It is within this diffuse, but yet powerful relationship between globalization and localization, between modernity and tradition, that majoritarian cultural nationalism in the form of *Hindutva* politics has been allowed to grow and have a psychological impact. As political consciousness has been rising among marginalized groups, religion and nationalism have become effective means of communication and protest as they divert attention away from class adversary and asymmetrical power relations. In this sense they have been instrumental in the search for a securitized Hindu subjectivity in the light of global change and modernity.

The search for securitized subjectivity – the verification of Hindu identity

This search for securitized subjectivity is intimately connected to the strive for cultural confidence among Hindu nationalists and their followers. To work as a securitization process, in the sense of obtaining a confidence in being, Hindu nationalism needs to establish clear boundaries around *a* distinguishable *self*. This involves the construction and verification of the cultural roots of one exclusive identity pattern at the expense of others. It means focusing on those real or imagined relationships that link together a restricted interpretation of the past with that of the present in order to justify future politics. The Ayodhya event displayed all the necessary ingredients to allow this to happen. It therefore works as the starting point for understanding how Hindu subjectivity has become securitized through empiricist fact-finding. This securitization process is further explored in relation to the place-making practice among the Hindu diaspora; and through the use of the Muslim other in this course of events.

The destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya was in many ways the culmination of one of the most important social, political and religious forces in contemporary India; the rise of the Hindu nationalist (or *Hindutva*) movement. The unfolding of events in Ayodhya showed how a myth was being transformed through the introduction of new ideas, new values and new stories and how this transformation has occurred within a structure of mythic discourse rather than outside it. As discussed earlier, this 'mythic discourse' has been propped up by reference to 'true history' and 'authentic accounts' and has been aimed at connecting the *Hindutva* version of Hinduism to Indian history and Indian national identity. The battle for *Ramjanmabhoomi* (Rama's temple – the birthplace of Rama) is part of a wider struggle for 'Hindu' identity and 'Hindu' consciousness as a means to construct a unified Hindu tradition that can establish Hindu power over all communities in India.

India, the BJP insists, is a Hindu nation and L.K. Advani, one of the principal leaders of the BJP, has even suggested that Muslims, Christians and Sikhs living in India be referred to as 'Mohammadi Hindus', 'Christian Hindus' and 'Sikh Hindus' in order to emphasise the ancient and persisting character of the Indian nation-state (Smith 1993). The story is that the Islamic ruler Babur had destroyed the immemorial Hindu (Rama) temple and erected a mosque on its ruins and Hindu nationalists have long insisted that the mosque be destroyed and a Hindu temple built there instead. By viewing history as linear, Hindu nationalists exhibit a time conception that is highly consistent with positivist empiricist notions of what constitutes history. In the case of Ayodhya the Indian nation had been founded by Ram and undone by Babur. This historical 'logic' makes demands for the re-enactment of medieval politics seem 'natural'. The *Babri Masjid*, and similar sacred places, are seen as symbols of Hindu subjection, which makes their destruction a necessary part of the liberation movement of the Hindus. The strategy is to deny creativity to the Muslims (Bhattacharya 1991: 128).

> When the Babri mosque was destroyed, we celebrated. We let off fire-crackers and danced in the streets. The stuff that was found there was all Hindu idols, Hindu symbols – Babur had ignored all that and built a mosque there instead.
>
> (interview with a 50-year-old male Hindu merchant in Jaipur, belonging to the Mali caste)

To 'prove' their case, Hindu nationalists have supplied a list of more than 3,000 sites across the country where, they say, Muslim emperors usurped Hindu ground. Even the *Taj Mahal* has been claimed to be built by a pre-Islamic Hindu movement and then being appropriated by Muslim aggressors, rather than being built by a Moghul emperor to commemorate his wife (Misra 2000, Smith 1993). Any of these sites could become sites of contestation in the future.

These stories show how any cultural narrative must have supporting 'evidence' if its proponents are to convince others. To reinvent the present, Hindu nationalists have been busy reinterpreting the past and have been careful in cultivating both historians and archaeologists who provide official validation of their claims. As a result, archaeological excavations have been performed at sites described in the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Excavations at the Ramayana sites, such as Ayodhya, revealed that these sites existed earlier than the Mahabharata ones, which posed a certain problem as Rama of the Ramayana is supposed to have been present later than Krishna of Mahabharata. As one archaeologist commented, however, 'we will strive and strive with success to make archaeology and tradition about Rama and Krishna meet on the same plane of time' (B.B. Lal, as quoted in van der Veer 1996: 144–5). This search for evidence of what can easily have been a fictional poem shows the elasticity of myths when combined with empiricist linear fact-finding. As argued by one informant:

> Muslims looted India, thereafter Britain looted India and now the Congress is destroying India. The Muslims demolished a lot of temples – what is wrong with the Hindus demolishing one as well?
>
> (interview with a high-caste Hindu male in Pushkar)

The real force of the VHP propaganda stems from its ability to emphasize the objectivity of the archaeological records. The VHP has been successful in situating the chronologies of archaeology within a temporal framework by manipulating historical and archaeological findings as a means to relocate every item to its 'proper' context. By doing this, the VHP has also forced historians and archaeologists into the debate to defend their original field reports (Shaw 2000). This attempt to re-erect boundaries between archaeology and local tradition has made it possible to construct a single version of Ayodhya's past. By using a number of narrative strategies, such as concocted figures, dates and names, the myths become authenticated and create an illusion of concreteness, 'of setting the history right' (Bhattacharya 1991). As one of my interview subjects explained:

> I think the demolition was a good thing. Ayodhya is basically a Hindu place, Ram was born there and the mosque that was there was made from stones from the Ram temple. The Muslims destroyed our temple in the past and now they are doing the same thing again. At the same day as the Babri mosque was demolished, bombs were dropped all over India by Muslims – they are the instigators of all conflict.
>
> (interview with a 49-year-old male Brahmin Hindu owner of a jewellery store in Pushkar)

Producing a single historical version has been vital for the assignation of meaning to Ayodhya as a sacred site and for signifying oppositional Hindu (Ram) and Muslim (Babur) identities. Involved in this juxtapositioning of Ram and Babur is a number of romanticized myths, all beginning with the pre-Muslim period. This was a time of wealth and development, of high levels of cultural and intellectual achievements when the landscape was literally studded with temples. It was an age of civilization, as evidenced by histories about Ayodhya as being brought from heaven to earth (see the Ayodhya Guide – *Ayodhyaji ka Prachin Itihas*), as constituting a land of milk and honey. This age was followed by barbarianism, by death and destruction, with Muslims as archetypal villains and Hindus as heroes (Bhattacharya 1991). Attempts by historians to prove otherwise, through their insistence that Shivaji employed Muslims in his army or that Akbar's commander was a Rajput king, does little to refute such myths as long as they remain within the framework of mythical discourse.

The popularization of religious stories in Indian cinema and television, particularly the broadcasting of the *Ramayana* as a serial starting in January 1987, also brought Rama as a warrior god and Ayodhya into millions of Hindus in the privacy of their homes. In this sense it greatly increased general awareness of Ayodhya as the (supposed) birthplace of Rama. 'Ram', one man explained 'is the founder of all religions – all other religions are below it' (interview with a Hindu male in Pushkar). Televised images made this sacred centre all the more real and it became highly charged with affect in the popular imagination (Jaffrelot 1996; see also Baccheta 2000, van der Veer 1996). The serial, one man explained:

> not only affected and brought disharmony between religious groups, but they also brought disharmony within families. Brothers disagreeing over the contents of the serials started fighting each other.
>
> (interview with a Hindu male security guard in Ahmedabad)

The serial also gave the location of Ayodhya a physical dimension, which automatically made it into an area of archaeological interest and contestation. This physicality was further exacerbated by the BJP leader L. K. Advani's *rath yatra* in October 1990, where he postured as Rama. Advani, as an avenging Ram, gave a face to the *Ramjanmabhoomi* campaign and legitimized the whole *Hindutva* crusade (Chatterjee 1996, Ludden 1996, van der Veer 1992, 1996). The air-

conditioned DCM Toyota converted into a chariot was probably the most audacious mixture of religion and politics that India has ever seen, but perhaps more importantly, it served as a 'real' alternative (religious) story to that of the secularism of the Indian state. As two of my informants explained:

> Advani's yatra had everything to do with the Ayodhya conflict and so did the TV's showing of the [Ramayana] series. They both increased the tension between the Hindus and the Muslims which, in the end, led to the demolition. Religion and politics should be separated, but today I don't think they will remove religion from politics – they need the religious stories to reach their [the government's] political aims and goals.
>
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ahmedabad)

> Advani's yatra got all Hindus together. In the past, the caste system prevailed – you never used to say that you were a Hindu, in the sense of how Muslims call themselves Muslims, instead you would say you were a Brahmin, Aggarwal, Rajput and so on. The initial effect of the rath yatra was that it united all Hindus.
>
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ajmer belonging to the rajput caste)

The yatra thus worked as a homogenizing feature of Hindu nationalism. BJP's use of the term *Ram Rajya* (the Hindu symbolic shorthand for the ideal state) also works at the national level and serves the purpose of legitimating the past at the same time as it conjures up images of the future. While *Ram* refers to Rama, the mythical warrior/king of the Ramayana as discussed earlier, *Rajya* takes on a territorial dimension as it refers to Rama's state or kingdom – the golden Age of Hindu tradition. Rather than just restoring the *Ram Rajya*, the BJP has made its establishment a central goal (Cook 2001; see also van der Veer 1996). The distinction is crucial as it points to the reinvention, not only restoration, of tradition, where the use of multiple layers of meaning (often in ambiguous terms) has enabled the BJP to justify future politics. As a result, the BJP has been able to appeal to widely disparate political groups.

This emphasis on 'the rule of Rama' has, in reality, few precedents in Hindu religiosity, but should be seen as a modern ideological move in order to nationalize religion among the middle classes. 'The appropriation of the Rama cult by Hindu nationalism signifies the articulation of sacred space and national territory' (van der Veer 1996: 259). It brings together, in other words, the politics of *Hindutva* with the Hindu *Rashtra*. In doing this, the Hindu diaspora has played an important part. Not only has events in India been reflected among Hindu diaspora communities, but, more importantly, Hindu nationalism has been used as a means to resist exclusionary policies in the host societies while simultaneously supporting *Hindutva* politics in India.

The Hindu diaspora and the migrants' construction of the *Hindu Rashtra*

At the height of the Ayodhya event, many Hindu Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) gave financial support to the plan for the construction of a Hindu temple. Such support has been particularly directed towards right-wing Hindu nationalist organizations, like the RSS, the VHP and the BJP. Overseas populations in Great Britain and the United States have been especially active in this regard and it is clear that *Hindutva* ideology and organization have become increasingly visible in many diaspora South Asian communities since the early 1990s (see Vertovec 2000, Bhatt 2000, Jaffrelot 2002, Rajagopal 2000). The RSS has established itself in some 150 countries, including some sixty *shakhas* (branches) in the UK, together with close ties throughout Europe. The VHP has become the central organization which claims to represent the entire Hindu world. In doing this, it propagates a *Hindutva* world-view emphasizing Hindu collective power. The VHP has twelve branches in the UK, twenty-five chapters in the US, two in Canada, branches in six other European countries and a large number of branches in other non-Western countries. Most of these are affiliated with Vishwa Hindu Parishad International (VHPI) (Bhatt 2000, Mukta 2000, van der Veer 1996).

The RSS's main concern has been the loss of Hindu identity as a result of Western materialism, consumption, permissiveness, immorality, corruption and the pursuit of profit, while the overwhelming problem for the VHP has been the historical victimization of the global Hindu community and its necessary resurgence in contemporary times (Bhatt 2000, Mukta 2000). The RSS has particularly pointed to the vulnerability of children and adolescents in regard to Western values, but also in relation to other minority communities in the West. As noted in relation to a Hindu Sangam gathering organized by the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS, the RSS equivalent outside of India) in the UK:

> Once proper Hindu values are cultivated it is found to have an all round healthy impact in contrast to the growing indiscipline and permissiveness of the Western society. For example, the Hindu Sangam (HSS Gathering in Bradford in 1984) afforded a striking contrast to the Caribbean Festival, also held during the same period in UK, which became notorious for vulgarity, drinking, brawl, etc., where the police had a tough time in controlling its participants.
>
> (quoted in Bhatt 2000: 572)

This quote alludes to the fact that, in the UK, religious relations have largely functioned as class relations. The religious boundaries between Hinduism and Islam have come to stand for the difference in material wealth between the economic success of factions of the east African Asian merchant communities and

the rather impoverished Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean communities (Bhatt 2000). The emergence of separate Hindu student societies is a recent example of this process. The movement was established in the 1990s and can be found at most major academic institutions, and its spokespeople come mostly from middle-class families based in the Midlands. Their parents have come to Britain from East Africa or directly from India, while the students are usually born in the UK. The initial intention was to create a Hindu society separate from the existing 'Asian' or 'Indian' societies. As a result, students are increasingly being educated through lectures and leaflets encouraging them to identify themselves as Hindus as opposed to Asians. The Asian label and the power of naming and recognition that characterize multicultural politics are questioned by proponents of these societies. A speech repeated across UK campuses during 1994 and 1995, entitled 'Who the hell do you think you are', was quite explicit in this regard as the various speakers examined the Asian label:

> This term has also some serious repercussions for us. Let me just give you a few examples. Salman Rushdie, when he wrote the book Satanic Verses, the newspapers had headlines "Asians call for Rushdie's head". During the Gulf War, "widespread support for Saddam", and, most recently in East London, "Asian thugs murder white boy". It was not my community that called for Rushdie's head. It was NOT my community that supported Saddam Hussain. And it wasn't Hindu youths that hacked to death that white boy in East London. If anything, if they can be called problems at all, they are clearly Muslim problems not Hindu problems.
>
> (quoted in Raj 2000: 544–5)

The subtext of the speech is that Hindus are nothing like that. This view of Hinduness is part of an ideological understanding that portray Hindus in the West as hard-working, law-abiding, family-oriented, morally upright and economically successful (Bhatt 2000). These values are meant to increase the status of an explicit Hindu community in its dealings with the British state, but they also work as comparative values to other groups in the UK – especially Caribbean and Muslim – who become demonized in the process. Here the strength of the UK vernacular press is important. In many ways it acts as a medium for intellectual attacks on Western philosophies in favour of anti-imperialism and revisionist anti-Orientalism. The aim of much vernacular press is to replace the ideational structure of the West with a *Hindutva* centric world. The Gujarati press has been particularly visible in this regard. This is obviously linked to the strength of the BJP in this western state, which has led the way in the politics of Hindu nationalism. The fact that the Gujarati community in Britain is strong, both in numbers and in wealth, has resulted in powerful transnational links with the home region. The UK-based Gujarati newspapers *Gujarat Samachar* and *Garavi Gujarat* have provided explicit support to the VHP. In doing this they have appealed to the exile community through the use of emotive language and fierce xenophobia, thus appealing to the prejudices of this particular language community (Mukta 2000).

In the US we see a similar, but yet different pattern. Religious relations function less as class relations than they do in the UK, which has to do with the fact that the Indian diaspora constitutes one of the highest paid minority communities in the US (Rajagopal 2000). Compared to the UK, policies of multiculturalism have also worked differently in the US. The US has been much more explicit in its emphasis on assimilation and 'melting pot' than the combined focus on integration and minority rights in the UK. The US has also been more categorical in discouraging the cultivation of multiple national loyalties. Having said that, however, there are many similarities in the way different minority groups have pressured the American state for power and the Indian migrants have increasingly followed the example of other groups in this regard.

First, many migrants have been engaged in a 'far-away nationalism' as they try to reduce their guilt of being migrants from a poor and oppressed nation. This has involved fund raising and charity for the benefits of the homeland. Much of this charity has been collected by the Hindu Right – often without the donors' knowledge. Second, we see an increasing preoccupation with the reinvention of (Hindu) tradition and culture as a means to resist an 'ahistorical American culture'. In particular parents worry about their daughters' 'Americanization' in regards to rebellion, sexual freedom and marriage. Both the Hindu Student Council (HSC) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) take advantage of such parental fear for encouraging the parents to send their youth to various fora organized by the Hindu Right. These events are often advertised on the internet and persist in offering the only 'Indian' solution to life in the US. Third and finally, the racism experienced among many young South Asians has led to the search for secure selves in the reconstruction of one's dignity. With the often contrasting accusations of the African Americans as being devoid of heritage and culture, the Hindu minority is frequently being heralded as a 'model community' based on an ancient (and romanticized) past (Mathew and Prashad 2000; see also Thapar 2000, Rajagopal 2000).

Despite differences between the US and the UK context, the move among both diaspora communities is towards fixity and rigidity in the boundaries of Hindu identity (Raj 2000). The global economy has affected Indian elites at home and abroad and has placed these people in important positions of power that can be (and have been) used to channel their material, cultural and political interests. In India these elites have repeatedly launched attacks on the 'appeasement' of religious minorities by political leaders (especially the Congress Party), using the language of 'victimization' of the major community. This feeling of victimization and being 'hurt' through political neglect has seemed to ring true for many Hindus in the West struggling with their minority status and discrimination (Mukta 2000). In this sense the diaspora Hindutva movement is simultaneously concerned with 'minority Hindu rights' in the West and with 'majority rights of Hindus' in India (Bhatta and Mukta 2000).

Racism and social exclusion have created an increased self-awareness among many minority groups and have, through various place-making processes, been instrumental for the encouragement and reification of religion and culture in the

West. The *Hindutva* movement in the West has had to present itself as being above class, caste, gender or racial conflicts in order to unite all Hindus (Thapar 2000). The spread of Hinduism in the West is thus radically contrasted with the proselytizing activities of Islam and Christianity. 'In the Hindutva view, Hinduism does not convert others; instead, others are spontaneously turning towards Hinduism' (Bhatt 2000: 572). The fact that a number of academics in the West emphasize the importance of protecting and saving Hindu tradition in the light of migration and globalization, has provided fuel for this view of Hinduism (see Searle-Chatterjee 2000, Bhatt 2000).

This tendency to romanticize culture and religion is characteristic of much Western orientalism that sees India as the homeland of extreme spirituality. However, as argued in chapter two, such inclinations often play into the hands of orthodox and conservative elements of the minority community. Culture in these interpretations becomes fixed and unchanging – a bounded and protected zone that should not be questioned. It becomes, in other words, a reversed form of racism. In the diaspora, such above-instituted racism has opened up the canons of culture from below as a response to exploitation in various forms. Symbolic reference points are central to this process. As discussed earlier, mosques, temples and gurdwaras become central symbols of pride and cultural resistance against racism, marginalization and other forms of systematic discrimination (van der Veer 1996). As Mathew and Prashad (2000: 531) have argued:

> In a country where one's identity as Indian is sometimes denigrated, sometimes ridiculed and sometimes treated with condescension, there is an attraction in the uncompromising attitude of the Hindu right.

The reaction in many of these instances is to deepen the affinity with the home country in response to local experiences. The changing power of Hindu nationalism in India, with its reconstruction of Hindu identity, has clearly appealed to migrants in need of a secure identity in an alien world. Furthermore, when non-resident Indians promise to invest in India, they receive in return the implicit affirmation of their superiority together with a feeling of belonging and the acceptance as nationals of their home country. People in the diaspora also see the growth of Hindu nationalism in India as a way to express the political interests of a community that has suffered for a long time, while Hindu nationalists in India point to the ability of the diaspora community to profess Hindu values in a far-away land. The two movements are, in other words, two sides of the same coin and have served to strengthen Hindu nationalism in its search for one essentialized and stable identity for the Hindu majority. In the West other minorities have often served as the common enemy against which to launch exclusionary policies, such as the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean communities in Britain, as well as the African-American and other South Asian communities in the US. In India xenophobic hostility has traditionally been directed against the Muslim minority; the focus of the next section.[17]

The presence of xenophobic hostility against the Muslims

Although much attention has been paid to the Ayodhya incident and its aftermath, it is important to note that Hindu-Muslim conflicts did not start with the Ayodhya movement. Instead, as Brass (2003) meticulously describes it in his latest book, they have occurred with frequent intervals, or 'waves' during the last century. These intervals include the years 1923–7, in response to the collapse of the non-cooperation/Khilafat movement against British rule which had been characterized by Hindu-Muslim cooperation; 1946–8, when massacres and rioting took place followed by partition; in 1989–93 when a succession of riots took place before and after the Ayodhya incident, and again in the 2002 riots in Gujarat. But even between these periods, Hindu-Muslim tension and rioting have been defining features of modern Indian history, especially in the north, and have been accompanied by xenophobic images of the Muslim minority (Brass 2003: 8–9). The role of the *Sangh Parivar* family has been crucial for creating such Muslim stereotypes and for reinforcing a climate of hostility. In Maharashtra, for instance, the Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackerey has continuously played upon anti-Muslim sentiments. As one of his supporters expressed it:

> Whatever Bal Thackerey says is correct – this whipping up of Hindus is correct, because Muslims have ruled over centuries. Whatever happens in India today is the Muslims' fault, like the robbing, raping, blasts, bombs, demolitions, etc. It is only the Hindus that are affected by family planning, not the Muslims as they have their Personal Law and are allowed to have four wives.
>
> (interview with a 49-year-old male Brahmin Hindu owner of a jewellery store in Pushkar)

As Arshi Khan (2002) has noted, communal riots have taken place in all those places where Muslims are in minority, they have occurred almost every year and in the regime of different parties. Riot related deaths are usually confined to three sources: 'mob action', police killings, and 'isolated incidents'. 'Mob action' may involve armed confrontation between communal gangs or crowds, using sticks, knives, swords, bombs and kerosene, but it also includes attacks on defenceless people or families in their homes, the slashing and cutting of male group members, the rape of female members and the burning of all alive (Brass 2003: 65–7). The figures for the 2002 Gujarat riots (February 17–March 16, 2002)[18] are both terrifying and revealing in regards to the status of the Muslim minority community. Almost 2000 Muslims were burnt alive while around 20 mosques and mausoleums were vandalized and some even converted to temples. Most attacks occurred in the full view of the police, and were often accompanied by abusive police language against the Muslims. As an article in *Human Rights Today*[19] shows, the police are often part of the *Sangh Parivar* discourse, as manifest in some communal remarks by the police in Katipalla (Karnataka State) in relation to another Hindu-Muslim riot:

> You Muslims deserve to be displaced to Pakistan. You have no place in India. Right now we need only men. We will come at night to pick your women. You Muslims have been spoiled by eating too much cow meat. You beardys (alluding to the Muslim community in the District) are anti-nationals.
>
> (quoted in Khan 2002: 264).

Police killings are disproportionately of Muslims and they usually account for a large percentage of deaths in a number of major riots for which figures have been provided in inquiry commission reports. 'Isolated incidents' refer to cold-blooded killings of individuals rather than to killings through 'mob action' and they often function as the starting signal for the riot to begin.

> These people (the instigators) are hired by various political factions. They act as mercenaries and kill on both sides – Hindus and Muslims – often completely indiscriminately. Their task is to get the two communities to start rioting.
>
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ajmer).

It should also be noted that people suspected of promoting and participating in riots are seldom charged and it is only recently that commissions of inquiry have been launched by central or state authorities (Brass 2003).

The discourse in relation to riots is important in several aspects, as it not only reinforces existing stereotypes and xenophobic value patterns, but also because it actually produces conflicts and riots. In many ways one can argue that the current discourse has tightened the group boundaries and recreated xenophobic stereotypes in relation to the Muslim minority. The changed atmosphere was expressed in the replies of a number of my Muslim informants:

> Before it used to be Hindus and Muslims *bhai bhai* – brothers. Now the slogan is Hindus and Hindus, *bhai*, *bhai* – what the hell are the Muslims then?
>
> (Interview with a Muslim male in Jaipur)

> Before people used to help out regardless of religion, today that's not true. People don't help each other any more. Now when Shiv Sena has opened an office in Ajmer, they will spread throughout Rajasthan.
>
> (interview with a Muslim male in Ahmedabad)

This negative discourse is further reinforced through the marginalization process of the Muslim minority. In comparison to minorities like the Sikhs, Zorotarians, Jains and Christians, which are quite well represented in the fields of politics, employment, business, education and health, the Muslim minority is under-represented and even excluded from many posts. This marginalization has affected their style of living, education, employment, communication, transportation and various forms of health security. This is in addition to the fact that the Muslim minority has been the victim of riots, arsons, looting and biased administration and police (Khan 2002). As described by one Muslim male:

> The future of my children is not good. The Muslims are prejudiced against. We don't get enough support to educate our children – they have to start work after the fifth grade and even when they are educated and get jobs, they are still discriminated against.
>
> (interview with a Muslim carpet weaver in Jaipur).

Understanding the structural dimension of Muslim marginalization means analyzing how security works as a 'thick signifier' – as it points to the wider order of meaning, the discourse, within which structural relations are defined.

Indian mass media have played an important role in reinforcing this discourse of clear divisions of boundaries. For a long time Indian newspapers have followed an implicit rule of not directly naming any of the participating communities in riot related activities. However, as soon as the victim of an outrage is a Hindu and the perpetrator is a Muslim, names, types of clothing or facial hair features are mentioned, while this is seldom the case when the victim is a Muslim.[20] Here the role of rumours in the course of riots provides striking examples of how the BJP has succeeded in creating a climate of fear and why it finds a receptive audience. In 1990–91 in western Uttar Pradesh, for instance, two consecutive rumours had it that the BJP had found corpses of fourteen cows outside its office, followed by rumours that a Muslim had poisoned a water tank and that five hundred armed Muslim men were now heading in the direction of a Hindu locality. Riots ensued, despite the fact that the police could find only two corpses and neither animal had been poisoned. Another rumour, spread during the December 1992 riot in Bhopal, had it that Muslim mobs attacked a women's college and raped eighty women and cut off their breasts. The Bajrang Dal, the VHPs youth group, consequently organized murderous violence against Muslims. Soon after the riots it was clear that the women's college was never attacked (see Basu 1996: 72–3, Arslan and Rajan 1994: 158–9, Vardarajan 1999: 197–8).

In regards to this kind of reporting, we see a difference in the national Indian press and the local press. The national press has played an important role in exposing the violence and official neglect or misconduct, while the local, often vernacular, press has often been instrumental in instigating and inciting violence and spurring fundamentalist politics.

> The newspapers here (in Ahmedabad) have reported many gruesome details of what the Muslims are supposed to have done – details that then turned out to be untrue. This has created a rise in fundamentalism. People are getting carried away emotionally, they have no fear – then they kill each other. This is the reason why there is more tension between Hindus and Muslims in the city than there is in the countryside.
>
> (interview with a Hindu male security guard in Ahmedabad)

In 1998, for instance, several local Gujarati newspapers ran a number of undocumented stories about an alleged plot to corrupt Hindu womanhood. There was talk about Muslims paying large sums to marry virgin Hindu girls and that lakhs

(hundreds of thousands) of Hindu women had been the victims of this conspiracy.[21] This tendency to use 'womanhood' (a theme returned to below) as a marker of contestation reappears in much riot-related language, together with the emphasis on large families and the Personal Law issue. There is also a general inclination to connect fears of 'Muslim takeover' to acts of transmigration and globalization:

> There is a rise in Muslims in India. They are spreading and migrating from abroad because of Gulf money, the breaking up of the Soviet Union, the Talibans. What is happening is that while Hindus have small families, Muslims have large ones which affect the rise in Muslims in this country.
> (interview with a 54-year-old Hindu male in Ahmedabad, from the Arora middle caste)

Also, explaining the rise in Muslim fundamentalism as being part of the 'nature of Islam' is not uncommon, often as compared to the 'nature of Hindus':

> Hindus are generally quite peace-loving and tolerant. It is among the Muslims we find more fundamentalists which has to do with the aggressive nature of Islam – just look at the Arab nations!
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ahmedabad belonging to the Thakur caste)

Such opinions are frequently reinforced by the local media, based on a number of reasons why riot coverage tends to be biased against the Muslims and their alleged aggressiveness. One has to do with the tendency to rely heavily on the police for news and information. As discussed above the police are often institutionally biased against the Muslim minority. A second factor can be found in financial and logistic reasons as most news offices cannot afford full-time news bureaus around the country. Instead they have to rely on underpaid informants who may themselves be interested in relating the conflict in certain, often biased, ways. A final reason often has to do with built-in biases and lack of professionalism among newspaper staff, together with pressure for space and deadlines. In the attempt to be dramatic this can easily result in communal stereotyping where background context is ignored and where biased assumptions and instinctive associations are upheld (Varadarajan 1999).

The 2002 events in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat are no different in this regard. Anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim sentiments had been building up in Gujarat long before the revival of the Ayodhya temple campaign. As Sambrani (2002) argues,[22] the super-charged, post 9/11 atmosphere needed only a spark to cause an explosion. The Godhra incident on 27 February 2002, where at least fifty-seven people were killed when there was a fire on the Sabarmati Express train near Godhra railway station, was not a mere spark but a bomb itself. The passengers of the train were said to be *kar sevaks* (volunteers of *Hindutva*) who were returning from Ayodhya after attending a Ram temple-related religious ceremony. The attack was described as being premeditated and well-planned and led to the out-

burst of retaliatory violence over large parts of Gujarat claiming up to 2000 victims.[23] Indications of the involvement of Pakistan's ISI were reported in the press and at least 28 people were taken in for questioning,[24] but it remains unclear who was behind the attack and even if an attack actually occurred. A 2005 report argued, for instance, that the fire was accidental and that there was no evidence to back up the original theory that it had been an arson-attack by Muslim extremists. Despite this report, the incident continues to be full of speculations, myths and contesting accounts about what 'really' happened and the BJP has called the 2005 report an 'affront to civilized society.'[25]

Similar to other events, however, the role of the local media was, at the time, crucial in whipping up emotions and for instigating further violence. *Sandesh*, a Gujarati newspaper, published particularly inflammatory headlines, pictures and stories after the Godhra attack. A front page report on February 28, 2002 encouraged the readers to 'avenge blood with blood,' while another headline a week later warned that 'Hindus beware: Haj pilgrims return with a deadly conspiracy'[26] VHP also distributed leaflets in Ahmedabad during the riots attempting to alarm Hindus in the area:

> Caution Hindus! Beware of inhuman deeds of Muslims. Muslims are destroying the Hindu community by slaughterhouses, slaughtering cows and making Hindu girls elope. Crime, drugs, terrorism are Muslim empire.
>
> (quoted in Pinto 2002: 294)

Chief Minister Modi did little to refute these remarks but rather played a central part in defending some of the action through statements describing the riots as 'resulting from the natural and justified anger of the people', or, referring to the Godhra massacre, that the 'five crore (50 million) people of Gujarat have shown remarkable restraint under grave provocation'[27]

What the statements of Modi show is the extent to which the establishment seems to indirectly support and promote the cultural and religious aspects of the majority. As Khan (2002; see also Pinto 2002) notices, government-controlled media has shown tremendous interest in highlighting rituals, traditions and religion belonging to the majority community. The fact that many Muslim Madrasa (where Islamic books, Urdu, Persian and Arabic language are being taught), have been raided by the administration on the pretext of terrorism and anti-national activities, while thousands of RSS/VHP educational organizations, training camps, militant units, *shakhas* and other propaganda bodies have not been similarly confronted, reinforces the assumption that the establishment is biased in favour of the majority. Using the revolution in communication, the *Sangh Parivar* has been able to manipulate language, symbols and ideas to control and change the mind of a section of the people with the intention of capturing political power. This was evident in the Gujarat riots where, 'the role of the digital communications, the mobile phones, smart mail service, email, web sites, autonomous computer generated handbills and the posters, and the digital camera was pervasive, insidious and oftentimes dubious, being prone to misuse'.[28]

In this respect one must question the entire discourse on 'communal riots', which tends to suggest that ordinary members of various communities come together to riot and kill on the basis of their Hinduness or Muslimness and nothing else. As Varadarajan's (1999: 201) rhetorically posed questions highlight: 'By what logic can a politically instigated mob that enjoys the tacit backing of the state law enforcement be labelled a "Hindu mob"'? And 'what purpose does such a label really serve other than to mask the political nature of the violence which was perpetrated'? As argued by two of my interview subjects:

> There were political reasons behind the demolition of the mosque. The parties were behind it, they were the ones who whipped up people's emotions. The main reason for people to be joining in the rioting is economic – people are paid money to participate and fundamentalists among both Hindus and Muslims make people get carried away. They too play on people's emotions.
> (interview with a 54-year-old Hindu male in Ahmedabad)

> All political parties were to blame for the conflict – the BJP was directly involved, but the Congress was working behind the scenes and was equally to blame.
> (interview with a Hindu male in Ajmer belonging to the Rajput caste)

There is, in other words, no single definition of what constitutes either 'Hinduness' or 'Muslimness'. Even when we can argue that most victims of riots are Muslims, this is not the same as saying that all Hindus are in favour of *Hindutva* politics or that most Hindus generally participate in riots. Neither does it imply that Muslims in general tend to blame Hindus as a group. As described by one 38-year-old Muslim woman in Ahmedabad when discussing the riots of 1985 in that city:

> The Congress sent hooligans to incite rioting, and they paid for it. If you killed a person you got 2000 rupees, while if you just stabbed somebody and he didn't die, you got 500 rupees. This is the kind of politics that is happening in India. 200 people a day were stabbed in the 1985 riots. The hooligans stabbed both Hindu and Muslims.

Many of those I interviewed were also adamant in their refusal to see the recent conflicts as some kind of natural group animosity, but rather insisted on the political nature of the conflicts:

> Generally people don't want to fight each other, but money is often involved when it comes to the riots. People get paid to fight each other.
> (interview with a 19-year-old Muslim woman in Ajmer)

> BJP has been directly involved in Hindu-Muslim riots here in Ahmedabad, but all parties are responsible. Right now all parties are unreliable – they are

> just interested in filling their own pockets. All the communal riots that take place are incited by the politicians to get votes and enhance their power.
>
> (interview with a 32-year-old Hindu salesman in Ahmedabad)

What these statements all have in common is that they describe the conflicts and riots using a non-essentialist terminology. They emphasize how conflicts are constructed on the basis of isolated events; events that are brought together by seemingly calculating politicians in their search for power, influence and votes. In doing this, the events become historically fixed cultural chains. By manipulating and mobilizing traumas of the past, often with the help of mass media and novel communications techniques, Hindu nationalists have constructed new mythical discourses to account for the partition, blaming Muslims for the barbarities that took place. The traumatic experiences of the partition have thus deepened feelings of distrust between Hindus and Muslims, feelings that have been exacerbated because of the hostile relations between India and Pakistan, but even more so because of political manipulation of Hindu-Muslim relations, rioting and conflict.

As discussed in chapter four, the partition has worked as a Chosen Trauma that is constantly referred to and validated in new contexts. The re-occurring Hindu-Muslim riots, the Ram movement and the temple issue in Ayodhya and elsewhere, the Kargil conflict and the riots in Gujarat, are all examples of how this Chosen Trauma is reinterpreted, relived and recast at an emotional level. As exemplified by one of my respondents:

> The Muslims have weakened the Hindus because they have damaged a lot of temples. This happened already during the Moghuls. Gandhi also helped to destroy India because he let Churchill and Mountbatten decide to divide India. They played the Jinnah-card. The construction of Pakistan destroyed India and now we are threatened by both the Middle East and the West. Only a stronger India can save us.
>
> (interview with a 24-year-old Hindu male student in Ahmedabad)

This emphasis on a threatening world is also an indicator of how Chosen Traumas act as emotional and psychological 'glocal' nodal points. To this can be added the nuclear testing issue, as well as the struggle against terrorists after the 9/11 attacks which culminated in the Prevention of Terrorism Act during the former BJP government. As a Chosen Trauma it is built upon the notion of a unified Muslim enemy-other against whom 'the Hindus' can unite and project their anger and hate. The final section will provide some further thought to such identity mobilization and manipulation among sections of the Hindu majority in relation to globalization. In particular I will highlight the role of gender in this process.

Globalization and the use of 'Chosen Traumas'

The renewed focus on the temple issue during the last few years has been politically motivated from above and builds on Chosen Traumas of the past. Starting

on 6 December 2000, the eighth anniversary of the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the former Prime-Minister Vajpeyee was instrumental in bringing back the issue of Ayodhya. Through his descriptions of the building of a Ram temple as a national sentiment, he greatly boosted the morale of the *Sangh Parivar*.[29] Hence regardless of BJP's moderate image, the fact is that the entire *Sangh Parivar* (including the BJP) works towards the establishment of a discursive construction of an other, aimed at maintaining and reinventing a primordialist one-dimensional Hindu identity.

The question, as was asked in the previous chapter in relation to the Sikhs, is how successful such tactics have been in the light of numerous overlapping identity patterns? Compared to the Sikh situation it is certainly possible to argue that a more complete and deep-rooted process of othering has taken place among an increasing number of Hindus. The familiar other becoming the despised other has not only had some real or constructed historical events to rely on, but has also found a political establishment willing to support such views.

The rise of Hindu nationalism shows the force with which cultural bases have been used to build a categorical notion of the Hindu *Rashtra* that derives power from its ability to integrate nationalism with a constructed version of Hindu religion. Stories of glorious pasts, loss of territory and struggles against repressors have been fused to account for Chosen Traumas. History is portrayed as a logical chain that can justify today's action. As emphasized in VHP propaganda:

> The struggle for the liberation of Sri Ram Janmabhoomi and restoration of a magnificent Rama Temple at Ayodhya has been going on continuously, in one form or another, for several centuries. Many generations have participated in it and have paid a heavy price for martyrdom. Only the perverse and blind will say that the Vishva Hindu Parishad is the originator of the struggle. VHP represents only the latest reincarnation or organized manifestation of these centuries' old Hindu aspirations.[30]

The Moghul empire and the creation of Pakistan have been the most prominent recurring Chosen Traumas in the hands of Hindu nationalists. Such traumas have been reinterpreted and redefined in novel contexts involving the self and the collective other. By establishing rights for the majority to rule the state and the nation, a potentially powerful means of mobilization is provided which simultaneously gives democratic illusion and emotional satisfaction. As such it may be a particularly potent tool in times of turbulent changes, as it provides answers to existential quests for ontological security.

Within this process the role of gender has been crucial – especially as manifest in the discourse of the 'nation as mother'. The notion of secularism has always been difficult to combine with this 'nation as mother' discourse, as this discourse leaves little space for the accommodation and expression of religious diversity between and within religious groups. The tendency to conflate mother country with Mother Goddess (as in Bankim's song *Bande Mataram*), has never been popular among Muslims as it tends to sanctify Hindu narratives at the

expense of other alternative stories. The 'Nation as Mother as Goddess' has thus been an important source for Hindu nationalism. This mother goddess has taken the physical shape of the cow and the female, which together have communicated a great variety of cosmological constructs. These constructs, as van der Veer (1996: 87, 1999) points out, are used to reinforce the notion of the nation in bodily (essentialist) form as human beings depends entirely on the cow in life as well as in death, similar to how a child depends on his/her mother. While mother cow refers to family and nation alike, her protection refers to patriarchal authority and to the Hindu state; 'the rightful kingdom of Rama' (*ram rajya*). It is within this logic of religious discourse that the protections of the cow and Hindu women become the symbols of the Hindu nation-state in opposition to the Muslims.

This example shows how the imagined nation, the 'real' India, becomes one that existed before the 'invasion' of the Muslims and before the colonization of the British. Implicit in the struggle between the pre-colonial and the colonial nation is the idea that the Hindu nation is also an amorphous female who, through her absorptive power, is able to threaten both the aggressive Muslim male and the rational Western male in the encounter (see Inden 2000: 86–7). As a female, however, 'she' also needs to find protection through the realization of the (Hindu) Indian state. Hence, between all these state constructions stands the 'real' woman, over whom the fight takes place. A woman who, at the same time as she is the object of contention, also represents the essence of the unified body – the nation. As stated by Jawaharlal Nehru:

> (i)t is curious how one cannot resist the tendency to give an anthropomorphic form to a country… India becomes *Bharat Mata*, Mother India, a beautiful lady, very old, cruelly treated by aliens and outsiders, and calling upon her children to protect her.
>
> (quoted in Tickner 1996: 154).

Chosen Traumas of the past are thus constructed in relation to the cruelty against this old woman. The Muslims, and to a lesser extent the Christians, are mainly to blame. To this has been added the anxiety about declining Hindu numbers and Hindus as a 'dying race'.

> Physical impotency thus came to stand in for political impotency and inertia. Within this discourse, the Muslim with his alleged 'hyper fertility' and 'proclivity for violence' came to occupy the position of the predominant Other – more dangerous and hated than even the Britisher.
>
> (Sethi 2002: 1547).

This story has been recreated in various versions of Hindu nationalism and has been taken as an excuse for a more aggressive and disciplined Hindu male as played out in the RSS propaganda and camp activities. Within this process women have also been mobilized in the name of Hindu nationalism. The fact is that communal forces have been able to mobilize women far easier when adopt-

ing the ideology of the modern version of Kali or Durga than has been the case for women's movements in general (Agnes 1996). The emphasis is on service to the family and the nation, defence of the self and of the religion and community. That women have found it easier to externally direct violence against Muslim men and women than to protest against violent husbands or rapists from their own community, reflects how self is created in relation to an other and how such relationships are always characterized by asymmetrical power structures. Women get to represent the timeless quality of the status quo and of tradition, in the struggle between new and old, between secularism and religion, between modernity and tradition and between the global and the local.

Hence, in the search for Chosen Traumas, it is the female that needs protection from the demonized other. The female, as Tanika Sarkar (1999) has noted, is portrayed as the source of authenticity, of nation-making and of freedom from repression by external (Muslim, Christian but also Western) forces. Hence, praise is often given to the nature of brahmanical Hinduism and it is not unusual to hear Hindu nationalists (women included) complain that Muslims may marry four wives in accordance with Islam, while Hindus may not perform the ancient practice of sati (widow-burning). Occasional voices are, in other words, heard in favour of sati at the same time as women's employment is criticized, together with divorce, widow remarriage and sexual preferences like lesbianism (Sarkar 1999; see also Kolodner 1995, Sethi 2002). This tendency also brings together proponents of Hindu nationalism with Neo-Gandhians, as excellently illustrated by Radhika Desai (2002) and Meera Nanda (2004) in their critique of Ashis Nandy.

It is within these contradictions between modernity and tradition that the global-local nexus become most pronounced. Chosen Traumas are more likely to resonate with their audiences in cases of rapid change and uncertain structural realities – in times of increased existential anxiety and ontological insecurity. A number of factors have affected the ability of the Hindu nationalists to find relevant Chosen Traumas for persuading an audience in need of absolute reassurance and answers, such as territorial nationalism, unmitigated demonization, empiricist history-writing and a supporting establishment.

Here territory has been a major focal point in Hindu nationalism and, in comparison to Sikh nationalism, Hindu nationalism is likely to have benefited from its ability to portray Pakistan as the evil other who is infiltrating the Hindu *rashtra* from within (via the Muslims). The mixed feelings in relation to Western influence have also served to strengthen the territorial dimension of another Chosen Trauma – that related to the struggle for independence and national dignity. As Vajpayee himself explained at a VHP rally in 1991, the 'construction of the *Ram Janambhoomi* was necessary in order to restore national honor' (quoted in Chandra 1993). The fact that the Muslim other, and to a lesser extent the Christian (often in combination with the Western) other, have been thoroughly demonized in this process, serves as another comparative point of reference where the Hindu case seems to differ from the Sikh case. The use of historical examples, of linear empiricist history-writing, has worked to the advantage of

Hindu nationalists in this respect, as it has provided clear Chosen Traumas of the struggle between the worlds of Babur and Ram from which to redefine, reinterpret and re-evaluate the ongoing conflict. The fact that these images have been reinforced through the media and the political establishment has been crucial for the success of these Chosen Traumas. Together they have been able to supply a mythical support structure for memory and imagination that has served to redefine self and identity.

7 Globalization and religious nationalism: the future of India

Processes of globalization have affected individuals and groups throughout the world. The policy changes described as economic and political liberalization have involved a shift in focus from state-directed development to more private initiatives. In the developing world this has often been expressed as the fulfilment of certain political and economic conditions for receiving aid and loans. Structural adjustment policies, together with more general global initiatives aimed at global competitiveness have changed, and frequently reduced, the role of the state. This, in turn, has made it possible for new groups to emerge and compete for power. Intensified processes of democratization have simultaneously opened up for previously silenced groups to have a political impact. The breakdown of traditional structures of domination has been especially important in this regard as it has changed the structural relationship between the powerful and the marginalized. The spread of mass media and increased communication have also been an important part of globalization. People have become increasingly aware of life outside their own geographic habitat and the revolution in communication has made it possible for leaders to propagate their messages to larger audiences. Migration and policies of multiculturalism have further deepened the processes of globalization, thus impacting on the growth of local identities and far-away nationalism.

At a most fundamental level, globalization has changed the relationship between the global and the local, the global-local nexus, paving the way for a postmodern emphasis on difference and identity-politics. It is at this nexus of the global and the local that a search for security has taken place. Analytically it means deconstructing security as a thick signifier to expose the changed power relations between individuals and groups, in order to show how people and groups have become increasingly insecure in the light of modernization and global change. This has been the main aim of the empirical chapters. As an approach it has meant analyzing the consequences of structural and emotional insecurity as individuals and groups have attempted to securitize subjectivity by searching for one stable identity. Despite the fact that such an identity is an essentialist illusion, it remains a powerful notion. For Sikh and Hindu communities, securitizing subjectivity has meant ignoring existing divisions along lines of caste, class, gender, geography, nationalist and religious intensity.

As we have seen in the case of India, leaders often select from traditional cultures only those aspects that they think will serve to unite the group and which will be useful in promoting the interests of the group as they define them. In the case of the Sikhs, we saw that a number of actors were prominent in their attempts to construct a stable Sikh identity, such as the Congress, the Akali Dal, Bhindranwale, the SGPC, the Sikh diaspora, and not least the terrorists. Together they were all involved in the creation of a Sikh minority consciousness, affecting many Sikhs' awareness of ancient traditions and providing them with a feeling of being victimized in the light of global change. In the Hindu case, it was argued that the creation of a Hindu consciousness has had even greater political effects with a Hindu nationalist party heading various government coalitions for eight years. The legacy of the Congress set the stage for communalist politics with the BJP/RSS/VHP, and other members of the *Sangh Parivar*, being able to mobilize religious and cultural symbols and manipulate political processes. In both the Sikh and the Hindu cases these processes have been further reinforced by recent (primordialist) historians. Together they have affected the self-definition of the group and its boundaries, often to such an extent that the community or nationality created has become a very different construction than its predecessor.

The search for ontological security – Sikh and Hindu homesteading processes

This possibility for leaders and historians to mobilize identity has only been realizable as concerns about ontological security and existential anxiety have taken pre-eminence – thus highlighting how security works as thick signifier. In the Sikh case this preoccupation with security became especially evident through the Green Revolution and diaspora politics – both of which are intimately linked to globalization. The different diaspora groups were affected by multicultural policies and structural marginalization in their host countries, making them increasingly aware of their minority status. This in turn played a significant role for homesteading practices in the host societies as well as for diaspora involvement in homeland politics. At home the Green Revolution shaped the feelings among many Punjabi Sikhs of being discriminated against in terms of territory, language and religion. As noted in the empirical chapters, the results of the Green Revolution and diaspora funding were distributed unequally, widening the regional imbalances and increasing disparities between different groups. This in turn led to an increase in unemployment for some while we could see inflated wealth for others. Traditional sources of income for Sikh youth, such as the army, were also curtailed and agricultural migrants from other parts of India resulted in an oversupply of agricultural labour. The lack of an industrial revolution in Punjab, which could have supplemented employment in the agricultural sector, further jeopardized security for many Sikhs, especially for young men in the countryside.

Operation Bluestar intensified these feelings. The disregard shown by the central government for Sikh autonomy and religious beliefs had repercussions

throughout Punjab and abroad, and heightened the need for securitizing subjectivity among many Sikhs. Previously secular Sikhs now felt the need to show a united front, a stable identity that could resist further attacks. Among various diaspora Sikhs, the Bluestar operation was regarded as an imperialist attack on their homeland where the only solution was secession from India and the creation of *Khalistan*. The notion of *Khalistan* was, for many diaspora Sikhs, closely connected to the idea of a home. In Punjab, Bhindranwale's romanticized version of a Sikh past in relation to a future Sikh nation, guided by Sikh values, was able to provide an idea of a place especially made for the believing Sikhs.

Operation Bluestar also made many secular Sikhs significantly more aware of their religious identity. The search for ontological security thus resulted in the display of religious attributes, such as the growing of beards and wearing of turbans, as a means to identify with a common place and a shared origin. This place-making process was even more accentuated among diaspora Sikhs, especially Jat Sikhs, who tried to demarcate a place with regards to their host societies; in relation to other Sikh groups in the diaspora as well as in relation to Punjab itself. In both the Sikh and the Hindu cases, the importance of media also meant an increase in political awareness of nationalist and religious movements in other places and set the discourse of modernity and globalization against religious traditions.

Among Hindus, the upsurge in nationalist sentiments has been closely connected to the liberal policies introduced in the early 1990s. Many people lost out in the deregulation process and as a result of greater international competition. This in turn has had some significant consequences for democratic content, with political representatives tending to converge on the neo-liberal programme which, as some have argued, has prevented a real democratic choice from taking place. The emphasis on *swadeshi*, or home-produced goods, and the emergence of 'anti-western', 'anti-elite' discourses must thus be understood in relation to those who have suffered through the process of liberalization and globalization. The preoccupation with Hindu tradition and culture among the Hindu diaspora has similarly worked as a means of resistance to the cultural traditions of their host societies. The psychological contradiction between those who have the means to choose a Western life-style and those pulled towards tradition, rituals and religious beliefs, puts into focus the structural conditions of security, emphasizing how security works as a thick signifier. A preoccupation with ontological security became evident among many Hindus living in India and abroad. Being left out of the modernization process and experiencing various forms of relative deprivation due to the idealization and celebration of consumer culture in media, many middle-class and lower middle-class Hindus found themselves in a psychological limbo. Moving beyond this limbo meant active engagement in cultural politics. This search for cultural confidence was readily acted upon by Hindu nationalist groups as they emphasized the struggle for Hindu identity and Hindu consciousness as a means to construct a unified Hindu tradition that could bring together all Hindu communities. Upper-caste Hindus also became involved in this process as they interpreted the reservations for disadvantaged groups as being a kind of reversed discrimination of the majority Hindus. The way secularism has

worked to require government intervention in religious affairs has furthermore increased the awareness of religious affiliation as a secure category that can be exploited to the advantage of religious groups.

Securitizing subjectivity: creating Hindu and Sikh stable social selves and abject-others

All these factors have made the search for securitized identity a primary preoccupation among many Hindus, resulting in a stable social self that is built upon the idea of an immemorial Hindu nation. The Ayodhya event displayed a historical logic that relied on the notion of a demonized abject-other, the Muslims, who had consistently taken part in Hindu subjection. The construction of a social self always involves intersubjective human relations. In the case of collective bodies this means telling a story 'as if' this social self actually existed. The more essentialist such stories can become, the more likely they are to create boundaries between self and others. Producing a single historical version of Ayodhya as a sacred place has intensified antagonistic oppositional Hindu (Ram) and Muslim (Babur) social selves. The fact that Muslims are held responsible for conquering India, for destroying temples and for falsifying Hindu historical accounts, has made this linear past even more believable for Hindus in need of one secure social self. The creation of Pakistan, together with continued hostile relations between India and Pakistan since the partition, has played an important role in this process and has supplied clear Chosen Traumas for many Hindus. This has been further exacerbated through the televised images of Ramayana, which have provided visual personifications of historical myths. The combination of these images and those conjured up by empiricist historians and Hindu archaeologists have served to locate the present in a verified past, thus making a future secure social self a reality.

Sexualized notions of Muslims as 'constant breeders', soon to take over the Hindu nation, have further worked to essentialize and demonize Muslims and make them into abject-others. The role of Muslim women has been especially instructive in this regard as they have been made pawns in the hands of religious leaders from both Hindu and Muslim communities, as well as in relation to the Indian state. In addition, it is important to be aware of how global discourses on colonialization and terror have intensified the notion of Muslims as 'the other'. The inclination to view Hindus as 'tolerant', while Muslims are commonly described as 'fanatic' and 'bigoted', has resulted in ascribed historical categories used to reinterpret past and present global policies. Presenting Hindus as tolerant has the implicit consequence that other groups must be less tolerant, or even intolerant, such as the Muslims. This tendency to make ontological claims based on dichotomies and stereotyped categorization has thus created an avenue for the securitization of subjectivity among many Hindus, juxtaposing unwanted traits onto the other – the Muslims. In this regard it is possible to argue that Hindu nationalists have been successful in their construction of a secure and stable Hindu social self.

Here it is important to note, however, that, even if leaders have been largely responsible for such a transformation of self into an essentialized 'as if' identity, this does not automatically imply that we can equate identity with interests. First of all it should be pointed out that leaders also tend to be part of their own construction of the group – which suggests that they may themselves feel threatened by various forces of political, economic or social alienation. Second, there are always internal tensions and inconsistencies among the various identities and group memberships of individuals which are not open to simple solutions.

Analyzing the Sikh conflict in the eighties, we see for instance how the Sikh-dominated party of Akali Dal – one of the major actors in the conflict between Punjab and the central government – was formed as a result of a concern with Sikh identity. There was, at the time when the party came into existence, a growing concern with gurdwaras being controlled by non-believing Hindus rather than religious Sikhs. The notion that Akali Dal could control Punjab only if all Sikhs voted for them and the attempts made by Congress to prevent such a development, makes us observant of the divisive political rhetoric of political elites. However, it does not take away from the fact that such rhetoric was unable to result in the creation of *one* stable Sikh identity that was to take precedence over other identities – at least not until many Sikhs found themselves concerned with the search for ontological security. The increased tension between (some) Hindus and (some) Sikhs in the eighties puts into focus the extent to which such tension is a function of electoral politics where candidates have attempted to carve up the electorate into favourable voting blocks by promoting inter-group fear and animosity (see e.g. Rudolph and Rudolph 2001, Kohli 1990, Kolodner 1995, Oommen 1994). But it does not explain the emotional underpinnings of how Sikhs became preoccupied with the creation of a secure one-dimensional social self. Neither can leadership manipulation alone make us understand why such a securitization process largely failed – why Sikh leaders were unable to build upon Chosen Traumas of the past as a means of constructing a secure self in relation to an abject-other, as was the case with Hindu nationalist leaders.

There was, in the seventies, a preoccupation with Sikh religious values as a reaction to more general processes of globalization and modernization, as emphasized above. However, it was the failure of the Bluestar Operation, and its consequences, that in reality moved more than a subsection of the Sikh population to become concerned with the securitization of subjectivity. Bhindranwale, with his charisma, flair for language and use of religious symbols, had set the stage for making people aware that they were being discriminated against. His chosen rhetoric was also meant to blame the Hindus (often by failing to make a distinction between Hindus and the central government) for Sikh subjection. Similar to Hindu nationalists, he repeatedly used religious and historical myths and events to narrow down what constituted a 'real' Sikh. These myths were then used to justify the use of force for a righteous cause. His emphasis on the term *quam* to describe the religious and national characteristics of the Sikhs made him an implicit supporter of an independent nation of *Khalistan*. It also provided answers

to the existential anxieties and ontological insecurities felt by many Sikhs in Punjab at this time.

However, even Bhindranwale failed to create a clear abject-other that was needed to conceptualize Sikh identity in one-dimensional terms. The Operation Bluestar made some headway towards producing such an identity as it was followed by anti-Sikh riots, political repression and terrorist acts. A minority consciousness did emerge among many Sikhs in Punjab and was also dramatically noticeable amongst diaspora Sikhs who were already involved in various politics of recognition in their host societies. The creation of an introspective victim diaspora was immediately seen in the upsurge of new organizations, with many explicitly supporting the notion of *Khalistan* and terrorist groups. In Punjab the formation of a 'siege psychosis' took place as a result of central politics and terrorist activities, with many Sikhs feeling alienated from mainstream India and becoming more aware of their minority status and their religious traditions. However, there were no clear Chosen Traumas to rely on for generating an unambiguous abject-other that could have worked to secure subjectivity and to create one stable Sikh identity. Hindus were not collectively blamed for the Bluestar Operation and its consequences, as there was little previous (real or imagined) hostility to rely upon. The myths supplying the foundation for political leaders to conjure up links between past, present and future scenarios were thus largely absent or too ambiguous to be used for political mobilization. The geographical or mythical foundation of a nation-state, a *Khalistan*, was also unclear and failed to supply ready-made images of past injuries as well as a desire for the return of lost territory. The fact that the *Khalistan* movement had developed abroad also supports the notion that it may be easier to globalize a local voice than localizing a global one – particularly in cases where no clear abject-other comes into existence.

Religion and nationalism as identity-signifiers: comparing the Sikh and Hindu cases

There was, in other words, no clear bridge built between self conceptions and group definitions (or context-bound and context-traversing identities) of what it meant to be a Sikh living in Punjab. Acknowledging feelings of Sikh separateness or the emergence of a Sikh minority consciousness does not mean that there existed a common internalization of external events. Sikhs in Punjab did not, in other words, respond to repression or terrorist acts in a uniform way. A successful securitization of subjectivity – the ability to see oneself as an essentialist entity – did not take place. This had to do with the failure to secure feelings of fear and discrimination in a perceived 'objective' reality – a linear history which assigns places, persons and events into perceived 'real' chains that can provide clear notions of who the other is. Only through the perception of history as linear and 'true' can Chosen Traumas be created.

Lacking clear Chosen Traumas, leaders failed in their efforts to link nationalism and religion in such a way as to resonate with a majority of the Punjabi Sikhs. Without such traumas, no obvious abject-other could be found onto which to

direct people's frustrations and feelings of despair and hopelessness as a result of dramatic change. Depending on their structural position in the Sikh society, people reacted quite differently to what they saw as an attack on their religion. This affected the extent to which they perceived Sikhism as an answer to violent events, and especially the extent to which they connected this to an autonomous state. The fact that territory has never been a focal point for Sikh theology has also made it hard for political leaders to equate peoplehood and nationality in the case of Sikhism. This was different for many diaspora Sikhs where the struggle for a home (even abroad) became intimately linked to homeland politics. Imagining the nation, especially in its religious form, has become a way for many migrants to solve a crisis of ontological security and existential anxiety. The fact that many Sikh diaspora groups have felt discriminated against by the majority population has often submerged differences between various diaspora groups and resulted in the creation of an abject-other (often the majority population). This in turn has provided Chosen Traumas that have less to do with the historical past of the homeland and more to do with previous relations between majority and minority communities in the host society. In a broader sense this is often reflected in the (reimagined) historical discourse on the West's treatment of 'its' others. Historical events, such as the Komagata Maru incident, have later been reactivated to explain West's consistent inability to provide (structural) access to their societies. Among many Sikh diaspora groups, especially Jat Sikhs, this has resulted in a search for a fixed culture and true religious traditions as a way to securitize subjectivity in response to the marginalization experienced in the host society. In this way, certain Sikh groups in the diaspora have been able to link nationalism and religion, as only the homeland can provide a justification for a romanticized past where religion is used to delineate acceptable behaviour and norms.

Hindu nationalism has similarly been successful in linking religion and nationalism, both at home and abroad. The role of the *Sangh Parivar* family has been crucial in this regard, as it has constantly reminded Hindus about past injustices and traumas as well as of the glories that could have benefited all Hindus had not the Muslims conquered them. Both *Hindutva* and the categorical notion of a *Hindu Rastra* derive power from their ability to integrate nationalism with a constructed version of Hindu religion. The abject-other is clearly delineated, categorized and bounded in this version as Hindu religious identity is constantly being defined in terms of what it is not – it is not the history of the Muslims. The Moghul Empire, the partition, the India-Pakistan wars, the Kargil conflict, the nuclear race, the Gujarat riots and the use of anti-terrorist acts in the light of September 11, are all recreated versions of past Chosen Traumas. Hindus – or so the story goes – have time upon time had to suffer at the hands of the Muslims.

Gender and race are always prominent in such constructions as they provide images of superior and inferior, of inside and outside, of powerful and marginalized. However, they may be especially evident in the Hindu version of 'nation as mother as goddess'. The essentialist bodily images implied by this discourse are both gendered and racialized. First we have the image of a child being born to a

mother, similar to how the nation gives birth to its (Hindu) subjects. In addition we find the image of the Hindu female as goddess. This goddess remained untainted before the Hindu nation was conquered, violated and raped by Muslim and Christian forces. The 'nation as mother as goddess' discourse hence leaves little room for the accommodation and expression of religious diversity. The real India becomes one that existed before this diversity took place. The only way to return to this pure nation is by limiting the growth of external elements (read Muslims). This tendency to imagine the nation as 'pure' is always a gendered strategy related to men's control over women's bodies as women are considered to be defiled or tarnished by other men. The neo-Gandhians' romanticized version of an India before colonialization plays into this gendered version of a pure Hindu nation – despite their claims to be critical of Hindu nationalism.

Racism and social exclusion have, similar to the Sikh case, also been of great importance for the encouragement and reification of religion and culture among the Hindu diaspora. Being often denigrated and treated with condescension in their host countries, many diaspora Hindus have found a refuge in homeland politics. The construction of a clear Hindu identity has appealed to migrants in need of a secure stable social self in a structurally alien and uncompromising world. Diaspora politics and Hindu nationalism in India have thus worked together to reinforce the links between nationalism and religion, thus providing the previously mentioned bridge between self-conceptions and group-definitions (or context-bound and context-traversing identities) of what it means to be a Hindu. Territory has here been a major focal point. In comparison to the Sikh case, Hindu nationalists at home and abroad have been successful in providing linear historical time conceptions that have made Hindu historical traumas closely aligned with the fate of the territorial integrity of the Indian (Hindu) nation.

External others, most significantly the Muslims, have infiltrated this nation and continue to do so through the influence of Pakistan and the Middle East. Only a return to traditional religious values can save the Hindu nation and prevent 'her' from becoming further defiled by external forces.

Among female Hindu nationalists the emphasis has been on service to the family and the nation, defence of the self and of the religion and community. Chosen Traumas involving the Muslim abject-other have been further reinforced in the sexualized images provided by these groups which portray Hindu men as having been too weak and effeminate in the past. A more aggressive and disciplined Hindu male is thus needed who is able to firmly deal with the dangers posed by religious others in an effort to make India a true Hindu nation. Hindu nationalists have, in other words, been able to connect religion and nationalism to provide answers to the insecurities felt by many ordinary Hindus in the wake of global change and processes of modernity.

Culturalist politics and its problems: reducing structural insecurity

Religious nationalism has thus been part of a larger process of culturalist politics that has gained in importance as the world has become smaller and as more

people find themselves unable to affect their immediate structural environment. Hindu nationalists, pro-*Khalistanis*, Neo-Gandhians, Sikh and Hindu diaspora communities, as well as new cultural historians, are all involved in such culturalist politics. As discussed earlier, culturalism, or politics of multiculturalism, tends to reinforce the status quo as it fails to truly challenge structures of marginalization and exclusion. Here is the danger with culturalist politics as culture is viewed as unchanging and unchangeable by collective human agency. In this sense it makes such policies the positivist and a-historical parameters of a new 'realist' social theory where cultural wars are played out in order to find a 'true' linear cultural history (Desai 2002).

Religion and nationalism are, for all the reasons stated earlier, in a particularly advantageous position to supply such cultural historical accounts. At the same time, political agency is itself debased by celebrating as 'resistance' perplexing ranges of glorified acts and non-acts which neither identify nor change structures of domination. As Desai has noted (2002: 62–3), culturalism substitutes a right for a left critique of universalism. In this critique, everything that has to do with globalization, modernity and Western values are bad, while everything to do with culture, religion and tradition are good and must be upheld. In India we see a clear convergence between a leftist critique of colonialization, Westernization and modernization as framed by the Neo-Gandhians and the surge in cultural values in Hindu nationalist discourse. Similarly, the new Sikh historians' emphasis on one historically true Sikh identity has become a political weapon in the campaign for a *Khalistan* homeland, particularly among diaspora Sikhs. In this sense culturalism is likely to reinforce the status quo rather than challenge it, and can make for strange bed-fellows.

At the same time it should be noted that this tendency in culturalist discourse to reinforce present conditions without redefining the existing power structure can have significant consequences for the establishment in the long term. In India, for instance, the obvious contradiction inherent in the portrayal of traditional women in modern disguise tends to open up arenas for contestation of meanings and definitions. Women and other groups have protested against negative representations of them as a group, forcing the state to recognize the existence of numerous sites of conflict outside the harmonious world portrayed in the media (see Sunder Rajan 1993). This emphasis on sites of conflict recognizes the possibility of a theoretical arena where such contestations can take place. As alluded to in the introductory chapter, processes of globalization, modernity and democratic politics tend to break down previously hierarchical structures of domination. In many cases, such changes have led to religious and cultural traditions being both challenged and substantially altered over time – in part as a result of women's and minorities' resistance and agency.

One should be aware, however, of the danger of unforeseen alliances springing up between these groups and reactionary social forces as the previous 'private' is brought out into the public. In India, the fight of women against pornography is, for example, often sympathetically viewed by the moral right; their demand for a ban on abortion following sex-determination tests is supported

by right-to-lifers; and their call for a uniform civil code for the nation is endorsed by fundamentalist Hindu groups (against the Muslims' personal law) (Sunder Rajan 1993).

Specifically gendered issues can, in other words, be deflected on to other areas in official discourses and representations. Still there are increasing possibilities that hegemonic history writing is uncovered within this process as women and other groups question representations, labels and stereotyped categorizations. This process I would refer to as the disintegration of hegemonic tradition from within.

To become effective, however, it requires that historically vulnerable group members acquire the tools, knowledge and resources needed to exercise greater leverage within the group as well as within the greater community. Only if equal access to resources and power is provided to the group members can they be expected to become less preoccupied with the search for security. The perhaps overused term of *empowerment* can here be employed to account for how marginalized group members must gain access to the resources and capacities needed to initiate change from within their communities (see Shachar 2001). In real terms it means recognizing the lived experiences of many community members, especially women, by realizing that complete denial of all cultural rights are unlikely to challenge hegemonic traditionalists. Cultural rights are already provided to the dominant group, who often has the structural means to set the agenda, exercise power and to determine what cultural practices are 'right', 'just' and 'true'. Hence, depriving marginalized group members of all cultural rights seem to be the wrong way to address unfair distribution and to initiate change. Instead, marginalized group members must be provided with the tools (educational, legal, institutional, and so on) to challenge hegemonic traditionalists from the inside without automatically risking their group membership. This can only be done by recognizing certain cultural right-claims as legitimate. As an approach it thus favours equality when it helps marginalized groups and members of those groups to gain structural power, while it favours difference for these groups and their members to achieve relational power.

Reducing ontological insecurity means, in other words, creating security for all people regardless of their national origin, ethnicity, gender, race or religion. This may seem a utopian vision. However, without such a vision it is difficult to imagine ways to counter the negative effects of globalization, modernity and the increasing tendency to romanticize culture and tradition. By deconstructing security as a thick signifier we are able to learn more about how groups become mobilized on the basis of culture and how such mobilization can have negative effects. But we are also able to understand how negative mobilization can be avoided. In this sense it is important to be aware of how the power of structural forces operates independently of political motives. As argued earlier, forces of modernization and globalization are likely to have structural effects, producing social and economic dislocation as well as personal insecurity. In response, people may turn to leaders who they hope will solve their problems of material deprivation, psychological uncertainty, and ideological absence.

However, this also suggests that people may be mobilized for different reasons, implying that people are not just pawns who are mindlessly manipulated in one direction or another. Degrees of mobilization vary in relation to caste, class, race, gender or other identity-signifiers. As the case of the Sikhs has shown us, it also differs in relation to perceived outside threat and others' definition of the group. The extent to which global forces are internalized to bear relevance on the group members' everyday existence must be taken into account. A psychological account, combined with a structural perspective, is thus necessary for understanding identity construction and identity conflict. The Hindu and the Sikh cases both suggest that the similarities that bind groups and nations together are partial and a matter of degree. For identity construction to be effective it must unite differences between the group members which it defines. At the same time it must exaggerate the differences of the individuals or groups from which it is distinguished. Both processes involve identity- as well as category formation. As processes they may occur over time, but as products they will change and can never be taken as 'given,' essential, or 'natural'. In this sense categorical products reflect the structural power positions in any society. The more such categories become internalized, consciously or subconsciously, by members of these societies, the more likely they are to remain unchallenged. This means that changing or dissolving negative category constructions requires structural change in terms of who has access to power and resources, and on what basis.

Implications for identity relations in India: defeating religious nationalism?

In this regard it is interesting to note how, quite contrary to classical neo-liberal theory, globalization, modernity and the transformation in communication has led to a revitalization of religious categories rather than to their gradual obliteration. This is particularly true of the Indian subcontinent, where group boundaries have sharpened and where religion in particular has remained the dominant social bond. Through its intimate relationship with nationalism it has legitimated violent group-based conflict, despite the emergence of modern democratic institutions. The inability of political decision-makers to combine liberalization of politics and economics with access to resources and distributive reforms has generated many angry men (and some women) who see armed rebellion as the only alternative to establishing a more equitable order (Deol 2000). Among South Asian diaspora groups we have witnessed a similar tendency, as religious nationalism has become the dominant identity-signifier in response to unequal access to the host society's structures of power. The role of intensified communication and increased literacy has been fundamental in this process, as religious nationalist leaders have been able to spread their messages more effectively.

However, as argued in chapter six, religion and nationalism will only become the most important identity-signifiers if they are able to provide both psychological and structural security. In this respect it becomes of interest to analyze the 2004 election results and its aftermath, as it clearly shows that psychological

security is not enough if one fails to address long-term material and structural concerns. At some point in time real political issues of marginalization, disadvantage and exclusion must be addressed. The fact that not many Indians could embrace the 'India Shining' slogan that Hindu nationalists kept repeating during the 2004 election campaign is significant for the way in which Hindu nationalism has failed to provide structural answers to the insecurity felt by many people. India has certainly been shining for the educated elite in India's bigger cities and for the growing middle-class population in the suburbs, but for most people only the sun has glared mercilessly. For the millions of poor people in the countryside and for those living in the growing slum areas of the city, the slogan was a slap in the face. Several hours a day are spent carrying water and visiting authorities in requests for accessible roads, drinking water, electricity, sanitary facilities and liveable housing. It was also this heterogeneous group that came to the ballot boxes during the parliamentary election to show its discontent with the current BJP-led regime. The election result, where the BJP lost power on May 13, 2004, came as a shock to both political analysts and to the political establishment. The Congress Party, headed by Rajiv's widow, Sonia Gandhi, won 149 mandates as compared to the BJP's 135 and dominates the government coalition, the *United Progressive Alliance* (UPA), under India's first non-Hindu prime-minister, Manmohan Singh.

The appointment of a Sikh prime-minister has been interpreted as an attempt by Sonia Gandhi to appease the Sikh community, but it has also been welcomed by some former *Khalistanis,* such as Jagjit Singh Chohan. Many Sikhs in Punjab have seen this as a final end to claims for independence while some Sikhs in the diaspora have been more reluctant to give up the struggle for Sikh identity (see Shani 2005). In Punjab, however, Sikh identity concerns have to a certain extent been marginalized by the last years' prevailing Hindu nationalist discourse. The fact that the moderate Badal faction of the Akali Dal won a majority of seats in the Punjab in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections can also be viewed as a significant step away from issues of Sikh identity in favour of predominantly regional issues. However, as Shani (2005) has noted, the Akali Dal still needs the legitimacy of the SGPC, which could easily compromise its moderate claims. For the time being it appears though as if Sikh nationalism in Punjab is only marginally affecting current identity relations in India. In comparison we can see how many Sikhs living abroad have greeted the appointment of Manmohan Singh with considerable scepticism (Shani 2005). Hence, compared to the situation in Punjab, the hope among some British Sikhs that the establishment of *Khalistan* would help reinforce Sikh identity over Asian/Indian identity is still alive and is likely to affect identity relations in a British context.

In India as a whole the results of the 2004 elections may result in some genuine changes in future identity relations. At the same time it is important to note that the electoral defeat of the BJP has not meant an end of the ideology of *Hindutva* or Hindu nationalist policies. The Congress Party's slogan was 'Economic reform with a human face' and the 'common minimum programme' announced in May 2004, was also aimed at increasing standards of living for

people in the countryside and to improve communications and agricultural investments. Other promises were focused on increased economic growth (currently at 6–7 %), through investments in infrastructure, expanded foreign investments in technology, service and export-based industry and a reduced budget deficit. The UPA has also emphasized the need to strengthen the legal system in order to further protect the legal rights of minorities – especially considering that nobody has been held responsible for the Gujarat massacre in 2002 or for the bloody pogroms against Sikhs in 1984. It has also promised to abolish BJP's hinduization of education and textbooks, to continue a dialogue with Pakistan, a reversal of the terrorist laws initiated by the BJP, and to increase trade with China and Southeast Asia (see articles in *Hindustan Times*, *Times of India* and *Financial Times* during May 2004).

UPA's future is, however, intimately connected to its ability to carry through structural reforms with a human face that improves life for the poor – especially if the BJP, or other extremist forces, are not to return. Having toned down the issue of *Hindutva* and being forced to compromise whilst in power, the BJP is likely to once again make *Hindutva* the corner-stone of its political rhetoric – especially in consideration of how the RSS has sharply criticized BJP's willingness to make concessions while in power. The fact is that the BJP needs both the RSS and the VHP for its centrist political ambitions. The RSS has been indispensable for the growth of the BJP in many ways. By leading the Ayodhya campaign, the RSS created a foundation for the BJP to appear as a social movement that was responding to people's wishes. A large number of BJP officials also have their ideological past in the RSS and the RSS has been instrumental for mending political rifts within the BJP. The BJPs relationship with the VHP is more complicated and there have been a number of occasions when the VHP has chided the BJP for not going far enough in its Hindu nationalist policies. This, however, has allowed the BJP to keep a moderate image in comparison to the VHP, at the same time as it has adopted a large part of the VHP agenda to retain VHP support (Basu 2000). In this sense the BJP became, over the years, a more centrist and moderate party as it needed to broaden its power base. However, as Basu (2000) notes, it is not in its interests to simply abdicate its commitments to *Hindutva*, when this is really what makes it different from other parties.

The BJP can thus be expected to make a sharp move to the right and to pay closer attention to controversial issues, such as demands for replacing mosques with temples or limits to reservation politics. The announcements by Uma Bharti, one of India's most controversial right-wing activists, in September 2004, shows that this may already be in the offing. Bharti announced that she would launch a national 'education campaign' to highlight the findings of a recent census that showed India's minority Muslim population growth rate outstripping that of the majority Hindu community. This was soon followed by Venkaiah Naidu's, president of the BJP, announcement that the party wanted to restore the balance in population growth rates – despite the fact that a number of leading demographers have interpreted the findings as quite misleading (*Hindustan Times*, September 9, 2004, *Financial Times*, September 9, 2004).

At the same time it is important to note that the results of the 2004 election have shown that democracy in India works and has been able to counter the return of an extremist agenda. In comparison to many countries in the West, India's heterogeneous under-class has not hesitated to vote against parties which they see as having failed to implement election promises. BJP became bitterly aware of this in the latest election. However, political analysts have also issued warnings to the Congress Party that the Indian electorate did not vote for any one party as much as against corrupted and self-centred politicians (Edward Luce in *Financial Times*, Tuesday May 18, 2004). The fact that the Congress was voted out in Karnataka in favour of the BJP and that the party lost in Kerala, where the Communist Party won, is an indication that this may very well be the case. Around 80 per cent of India's billion voters live in the 'bullock economy' without possibilities of even buying a bicycle. Another 15 per cent live in the 'two-wheeler economy' and can afford mopeds and televisions, while only 2 per cent – around 25 million people – have access to cars, trips abroad and to eat out. The BJP lost many of the voters in the first two categories and lost further votes because of the fact that India's 14 per cent Muslims voted tactically – wherever it seemed like a BJP candidate was about to win, they voted for the strongest opposition candidate.

This effective alliance against BJP from India's poor reminds us how the BJP has suffered defeat in the last few elections as a result of unfulfilled election promises. In Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, for instance, the BJP went down from 57 seats in 1998 to 29 seats in 1999 (out of 85 seats). Instead the lower-caste parties increased their share of votes. Identity-conflicts were regarded as negatively affecting work opportunities and economic welfare and there seemed to be significant awareness that local conflict only strengthens the power of the often detested police force. These observations reiterate the claims made earlier that, unless religious nationalism can provide both structural and psychological security, it is not likely to remain the most important identity-signifier in the long term. This obviously implies that also the current government must fulfil its election promises if it wishes to remain in power – a difficult task in a society characterized by slow bureaucracy, corrupt leaders and politicians and enormous inequalities and poverty. At the same time it is clear that the poor have learnt to use the few resources they have and that they will continue to vote out those in power if they do not get access to the resources they so desperately need – *Bijli, Sadaak, Paani* (electricity, roads, water).

Indian democracy remains in good standing, in other words, even if it is not a universal recipe to cure poverty, inequality and identity conflicts. The 2004 election has shown that it is possible to vote out an extremist religious nationalist party in favour of a secular alternative. The election also demonstrates that it is actually feasible to mobilize under-privileged, structurally marginalized groups that are often viewed as difficult to reach in the West. Having said that one should remember, however, that India also constitutes an example of a society where a fundamentalist party (the BJP in this case) has been able to mobilize voters from both the upper- and middle-classes – a phenomenon that seems to differ from that

of Western societies where extremist parties often find their recruitment base among marginalized groups. This in itself tells us something about how calls for religious nationalism are related to rapid structural change and works at a psychological level to counter insecurity emerging from such changes. At the same time it is important to be aware of how the election result says something about the democratic process as such, considering that democracy and freedom of expression paves the way for both democratic and anti-democratic forces. Events in India remind us that it may not always be an advantage to exclude such anti-democratic forces. As Kolodner (1995) has noted, while exclusion tends to create martyrs and strengthen resistance, inclusion can enforce compromises, tone down or even destroy previously radical groups. The decline of Hindu nationalism could indicate that this may be the case.

Hence, one can argue that, although religion and nationalism are more likely than other identity-signifiers to supply answers to people in search of security, they will only function as such if they are able to provide *both* psychological and structural security. As the Sikh and Hindu cases tell us, psychological security is a rather immediate concern where emotional reassurance and satisfaction play a great role. Blaming an abject-other will, at least temporarily, help in constructing a secure self by projecting unwanted parts of the self onto the other. However, at the end of the day, long-term material or structural concerns, concerns about water, roads, electricity or other similar resources, must be addressed. Unfulfilled promises hence work at both a structural and an emotional level, as they are clearly there to be experienced (the absence of clean water or paved roads) at the same time as they have emotional effects (anger, disappointment, frustration). This would imply that heightened identity-concerns in response to rapid change may be a time-limited experience which, as the Indian election shows, can be avoided if real political issues of marginalization, disadvantage and exclusion are addressed.

Glossary

Adi Granth The Sikh holy book compiled by the fifth guru, Arjan Dev, in 1603–4, also known as the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Akali Dal Literally the party of the immortals; the main Sikh-dominated party in Punjab.

Akal Takht The seat of temporal authority inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Amritdhari A baptized Sikh.

Arora A mercantile caste of Punjab.

Arya Samaj A Hindu reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) Majority Community Party; a national political party of the lower castes, especially the scheduled castes.

Bajrang Dal The youth organization of the VHP.

Balmiki Term of caste self-definition by scheduled castes in Ghaziabad and Khurja.

Bande mataram Hail to the mother(land).

Bhakti Belief in and adoration of a personal God.

Bharat Sanskrit term for 'India'.

Bharatiya Pertaining to Bharat.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) The Indian People's party; the main Hindu nationalist party.

Bharat Mata Mother Bharat (India).

Brahmin (Brahman); the highest *varna*, Hindu priests, the religious elites.

Bhoomi Land, earth.

Chamar A scheduled caste of labourers in northern India.

Chief Khalsa Diwan Organization of educated Sikhs established in 1902.

Chuhra The sweeper caste.

Crore Ten million.

Dalit 'Downtrodden'; militant term for scheduled castes.

Dal Khalsa the unified army of the Khalsa.

Devi The goddess Durga.

Dharma the appropriate moral and religious obligations attached to any particular status in Hindu society.

Durga Hindu goddess.
Guru A teacher.
Gurdwara Literally Guru's house; refers to Sikh temples.
Harijan Members of an 'untouchable' caste.
Hindu Rashtra The Hindu nation.
Hindustan A term for India, applied particularly to northern India.
Hindustani Pertaining to northern Indian culture, language, music; in linguistics, also refers to Urdu.
Hindutva 'Hinduness'; Hindu nationalism.
Jamaat-e-Islami (Jama'at-I Islami); Muslim revivalist and fundamentalist movement and party, founded in 1941.
Jana Sangh A Hindu nationalist party superceded by the BJP since the 1980s.
Janata Dal A political party formed in opposition to the Congress.
Jat member of the landowning caste of Punjab.
Jati endogamous caste grouping.
Jihad Striving (in the terms of Allah) to expand the world of Islam externally (through holy war) or to bring inner religious perfection.
Kachha Breeches; one of the five Ks in the Khalsa dress code.
Kali Hindu goddess.
Kamboh An agrarian caste.
Kanga Comb (part of the five Ks).
Kara Bangle (part of the five Ks).
Kar sevak A volunteer who took part in the movement to build a temple at Ayodhya.
Kaur literally 'maiden', 'princess'; refers to the name assumed by all female members of the Khalsa, compare *Singh*.
Kesh Uncut hair (part of the five Ks).
Keshdhari A Sikh who keeps unshorn hair.
Khalifat (Khilafat). The office of the caliph, the caliphate; specifically, the chief spiritual authority vested in the Ottoman sultans and terminated by Ataturk after World War I.
Khilafat Movement Indian protest movement of the 1920s seeking the restoration of the Khalifat.
Khalistan Literally the land of the pure; the proposed Sikh state.
Khalsa The baptized Sikh who observes the dress code of the five Ks.
Khatri A member of the trading caste. All Sikh gurus belonged to this caste.
Kirpan Sword (one of the five Ks).
Krishna Hindu god, who plays a significant role in the *Mahabharata*.
Kshatriya The second varna; the warrior caste.
Langar Community kitchen.
Lok People, world.
Lok Sabha The lower house of the Indian parliament.
Madrassah Islamic school.
Mahabharata Sanscrit epic.
Mandir Hindu temple.

Masjid Mosque.
Mazhabi A member of the 'low caste' of sweepers, also referred to as *Chuhra*.
Miri-piri the religious and temporal spheres.
Misl A Sikh military formation under the command of a *sardar*.
Mughal Empire in northern India, 1556 to circa 1730.
Mughlai Pertaining to Mughal cultural forms.
Namaz Muslim prayers; especially the daily prescribed prayer.
Nirankari A Sikh heterodox sect; particular popular among the subaltern classes.
Panchayat Local representative committee elected by several villages.
Pandit A learned Brahmin.
Panth Community.
Pradesh Region, territory.
Puja Hindu ceremony to worship a deity.
Punjabi The language of Punjab; pertaining to the Panjab.
Radhasoami A Sikh-Hindu heterodox sect.
Raj Rule, government; as the Raj, British rule in India.
Rajasthani Pertaining to, or from Rajasthan.
Raj karega Khalsa The Khalsa shall rule.
Rajput A Kshatriya caste group in northern India, dominant in Rajasthan.
Rajya Government, nation, state.
Rajya Sabha The upper house of the Indian Parliament.
Rama (Ram). One of the high Hindu gods.
Rama bhakti Devotion to Rama.
Rama-rajya The regime of Rama; utopia.
Ramayana Sanscrit epic about the life of Rama.
Ramjanaabhoomi The birthplace of Rama.
Rashtra Nation, state.
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS*)* National volunteer organization: a Hindu organization.
Rath (Ratha). Chariot, vehicle (on which divine images ride during Hindu festivals.
Rath Yatra The 1990 chariot procession from Somnath to Ayodhya organized by the BJP and VHP.
Sabha Organization.
Sadhu A world renouncer; an ascetic Hindu.
Sadhvi Female ascetic.
Sahajdhari A non-Khalsa Sikh who does not observe the dress code: often Hindu followers of the Sikh gurus are referred to as Sahajdhari Sikhs.
Sangat congregation.
Sangh Parivar Refers to the 'family' of Hindu organizations like the BJP, the RSS and the VHP.
Sant Saint.
Sardar The chief; leader.
Satyagraha Non-violent protest.

Scheduled castes Castes on a list of the lowest, poorest, and most disadvantaged castes scheduled in the Indian constitution for special privileges by the state (see also *balmiki*, *dalit*, *harijan*, and *untouchable*).

Shakha Local branch of the RSS.

Sharia Islamic law.

Shilan puja The VHP 'worship of the bricks' ceremony of collecting bricks and money to send to Ayodhya for the construction of a Rama temple.

Shiromani Akali Dal The party of the Sikhs.

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) Formed in 1925; the main elected body of Sikhs that manages all Sikh shrines and temples of the states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh from its headquarters in the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Shiva One of the high Hindu gods.

Shiv Sena Militant Hindu party in Maharashtra.

Shudra (Sudra).The last and ritually lowest of the four *varnas*.

Singh Literally 'lion'; the name assumed by all male members of the Khalsa, compare *Kaur*.

Singh Sabha The Sikh reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Sufi An Islamic enlightenment sect of the middle ages.

Swadeshi 'Of one's own country', particularly used as a term to denote native products. The Swadeshi Movement sought to replace foreign with native products in British India.

Swayamsevak An RSS volunteer.

Tilak Auspicious mark on the forehead.

Ulema Islamic learned men.

Umma The community of believers in Islam.

Untouchable Term used for scheduled castes as bearers of ritual pollution.

Urdu Hindustani language derived from Persian and Hindi, now the official language of Pakistan.

Vaishya The third-ranked, merchant *varna*.

Varna Hindu ritual caste status rank. Four sections enumerated: brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, shudra. The first three, highest varnas are called 'twice born'. Untouchables (harijan, dalit) castes are below the lowest varna (Shudras).

Veda The most ancient Sanskrit texts, which concern ritual.

Vedic Pertaining to or as described by the Vedas.

Vishnu One of the high Hindu god.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) The world Hindu assembly founded in 1964 to spread Hindu ethical values and promote the unity of Hindus.

Yatra Procession, pilgrimage.

Zamindar Literally a possessor of land; formerly a revenue farmer recognized as a landlord by the British Raj.

Notes

Introduction

1 It should be noted that I use the terms social constructivism and social constructionism to refer to similar phenomena. The reason I do not discriminate between the two terms has to do with the fact that they are used in different kinds of literature. Hence there is a tendency in sociological literature about nationalism or identity, as well as in political science and international relations literature, to talk about constructivist approaches, while psychological literature and literature referred to as critical social theory tend to use the term constructionism.

1 Globalization and destabilization

1 For general accounts of globalization, see for example, Hirst and Thompson, 1996, Kellner in Axtmann 1998, King 1997, Scott 1997, Scholte 2000. For globalization and International Relations, see Baylis and Smith 1997. For the relationship between modernity and globalization see for example, Alam 1999, Giddens 1990, Hall and Gieben 1992, Linklater 1998.

2 See for instance; *Understanding Global Issues 98/7*, which is devoted to an article on 'The Global Village: challenges for a shrinking planet.' For more general accounts of how globalization entails the Westernization of the world and the spread of capitalism, see Latouche 1996 and Ferguson 1992.

3 For specific accounts of globalization and postmodernity, see for example, Barker 1999, Featherstone 1995, Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991.

4 These terms are used by Kellner 1998.

5 See Hall (1997) and Featherstone (1995), who both talk about various effects of decolonialization. Hall emphasizes the tendency among the subjects of the former colonies to not only resist the dominance by the West, but to actually move to what he has described as 'the image of the promised land where the pavements where made of gold', i.e. the immigration from the former colonies to the colonizing states. This obviously complicates the unified images of culturally homogenous nation-states.

6 See e.g. Brass 1991, Gurr & Harff, 1994, Horowitz 1986.

7 See Brass 1991, Kohli, 1990.

8 International Labour Office, global employment trends, no. 1, 24 January, 2003. See also Scholte 2000, who makes a similar comparison.

9 Outsourcing may of course have mixed effects, creating unemployment and increased insecurity in rich societies and employment in poorer societies. However, in their search for cheap markets and unregulated labour, multinational companies can move their plants in search for further global advantages, creating insecure working conditions also for people in less developed societies.

10 See for instance Kolodner (1995). See also Pathy (1995), who argues that liberalization of the Indian economy may accentuate regional, religious, ethnic and caste conflicts, as well as resulting in food riots.
11 This aspect is dealt with at some length by Calhoun 1994 and by Offe 1991 and 1993. Offe argues that democracy solicits the people's participation and opinions while the transformation of capitalism requires great sacrifice, that many may be unwilling to accept. Similarly, John Elster (1990) has pointed out that there is 'an irreconcilable antagonism between democracy and price and property reform. Market economies produce inequalities, which must be legitimized as "reforms", which is bound to become problematic'.
12 See Deol 2000 (pp. 161–8), who compares the editorials of three major newspapers in Punjab between the years of 1981 and 1984: the *Tribune*, the *Punjab Kesari* and the *Ajit* – published in English, Hindi and Punjabi.
13 Peter L. Berger, in Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (*The Homeless Mind*, Penguin Books, pp. 3–11), as referred to and quoted in Pathak, 1998: 22.
14 Quoted *in Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, June 22, 2003.
15 Object-relation theory is mostly associated with D.W. Winnicot, who proceeds from the premise that human beings by nature are 'object-seeking'. Winnicot is focused on how the child develops through a process of learning to differentiate between her own body and intellect on the one hand and of other persons or things, 'objects', on the other. The discovery of 'the others' makes it possible for the child to develop her own sense of reality. The most significant with Winnicot's work is its break from enlightenment traditions through its insistence on individuals' propensity for play and 'other' relationship, rather than making reason the most characteristic feature of human beings. The next chapter, chapter two, will throw some more light on this theory when discussing the works of Vamik Volkan.
16 Works best described as 'Diaspora studies' look at the subjective experiences of displacement, victimhood, cultural hybridity and cultural struggles in the modern world (Ong 1999).

2 Securitized subjectivity

1 This definition is related to Brass (1991). However, while he defines ethnicity in a purely instrumentalist fashion, I try to combine his notions of instrumentality with a constructivist perspective. This implies that what defines a group of people as 'ethnic' at any given time in history may be very different from those aspects defining it at any other period of time.
2 McNay (1992: 172–5), further argues that Foucault's failure to analyze the structural sources of inequality, influence, resource, and power that overdetermine different types of care for the self, indicates a somewhat naive belief in a society as a harmonious whole.
3 Examples of such claims are Naomi Schor (This Essentialism Which is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigay, *Differences*, 1 (2), 1989, pp. 38–58) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*In Other Words: Essays in Cultural Politics*, London, Methuen). Cf. Craig Calhoun (1995: 204).
4 This argument is developed by Jane Flax (1990: 232) who further asserts that she, like many other feminists, is suspicious of theories that require denying the centrality of human relatedness or obviate the ways these relations become part of a complex inner world or distinctive subjectivity. Here she points to the fact that this would be to ignore that, regardless of cultural context, the first person we are in an intimate, social relationship with is a woman.
5 Edward Said's (1978) account of Orientalism constitutes an early exception in this regard.

6 Bhaba's (1984) critique of Said is interesting in this regard, as he acknowledges how Said provides a powerful account of how orientalism has supplied a eurocentric mode of representation, which has worked as a discourse of power and knowledge. However, Bhaba also argues that Said's study fails to provide an account of the so-called orient, since he does not engage in an attempt to investigate the process in which the colonial subject (the other) is historically constructed.

7 Although the categories used to define 'strangers' are negative (negative stereotypes), category formation in general need not have either positive or negative value assigned to it. Categorization is a routine and necessary contribution to how we make sense of, and impute predictability to, a complex world about which our knowledge is only partial. A similar argument can be made for stereotypes which need not necessarily be hostile: a stereotype can flatter. They are however at best partial and always constructed from a point of view (see Jenkins 1996: 83,123).

8 The case of IR-variant constructivism, as developed by Alexander Wendt (1999) and others, is a case in point as we seem to end up with reconstructed states built upon certain characteristics.

9 This shift between personal and social identity has to do with relative accessibility (e.g. that political scientists try to differentiate themselves in relation to each other but tend to stand united in meetings with e.g. biologists), and meta contrast (the differences between group members, e.g. academics, become unimportant when confronted by another group, e.g. politicians).

10 This agrees with Billig's (1987) critique of self-categorization theory and its belief that human beings have a natural tendency to categorize and that categorization reflects a cognitive necessity. It should be noted, however, that a number of authors interpret social identity and self-categorization theory in a wider sense. Both Huddy (2001) and Reicher and Hopkins (2001), for instance, make some interesting suggestions on how to extend self-categorization theory to account for context, meaning, choice and change. Here I find Reicher and Hopkins argument particularly useful as they agree with categorization theory that categories shape collective mobilizations, but argue that these definitions are not only perceptions of the present, but also attempts to make the future. The definition that most successfully succeeds in ordering the future is more important than whether it accurately represents the present. This is in agreement with a thick signifier approach that intends to deconstruct existing power relations in society by focusing on those who produce the discourse – those who make it 'true' – to understand the discursive effects of one's location in the power structure of a society. The emphasis on discourse constitutes, in my opinion, a wider approach to the study of collective identity than that of categorization, as it allows categories to be an intrinsic, but yet unfixed, part of the discursive ordering of social relations.

11 George Herbert Mead is one of the main representatives of symbolic interactionism, which is a theory that emphasizes how social interaction creates consciousness rather than the other way around. Mead proceeds from the child's development where the child, through interaction with others, learns to take the other's perspective. This makes it possible for the individual to create an objective view of herself and her identity as seen and justified by others. Here Mead differentiates between 'I' and 'me', where 'I' refers to the subjective self while 'me' refers to the objective self. The subjective self reacts in response to the outer world. When I talk I am the subjective self, while when I remember what I just said I am already an object of my own consciousness – an objective self. The subjective self is constantly made into an objective self as human beings remember and observe their actions.

12 The choice of these two authors is motivated by the fact that they proceed from two different, but related, post-Freudian bodies of work within the psychoanalytical tradition where one, Kristeva, proceeds from a Lacanian (or neo-Lacanian) perspective, while the second, Volkan, takes an object-relations approach as developed by Winnicot. I see these authors as, if not representative, then at least illustrative of two

large bodies of psychoanalytical studies. The fact that both of them deal with the real occurrences of group conflict (particularly Volkan), rather than with pure theory or experimental work, adds to their usefulness. The works of Volkan and Kristeva have been compared by Murer (1999) and the following account owes a lot to his interesting and insightful analysis of these authors.

13 See a number of recent accounts describing the language and discourse of riots and riot-related rumours, e.g. Varadarajan (2002) and Sondhi & Mukarji's (2002) accounts of the tragedy in Gujarat. Or for a more historical overview of the role of media in riots, see Brass 2003.

3 Nationalism and religion as securitizers of subjectivity

1 It seems fruitless however, to date either nation or nationalism. '*Natio*' originally referred to a group of people belonging together by similarity of birth, larger than the family, but smaller than a clan of people. The term applied particularly to a community of foreigners (Kedourie 1960 (1994)). '*Nationalism*', as originating from nation, consequently has no exact date.

2 As noted by Jane Flax (1990) this is obviously a drastic reduction of complex ideas.

3 As a discourse, nationalism advances a double thesis. On the one hand it can be argued that, when a group of people are constituted as a nation and form an imagined or real territorial entity, they are morally entitled to form an independent state. On the other hand, when a state consists of a multi-national population, it is guided by the belief that it should strive to become a nation by suitably homogenizing its citizens and moulding them into a spiritual whole (see Parekh 1995, Calhoun 1997). In some modernist writings however, only the first nationalist thesis is explored and ignored is the state's desire to become a nation and the massive cultural and political repression this often entails.

4 See Gellner 1964 and 1983, Kedourie 1994, Nairn 1977, and Tilly 1975. See also Connor 1994. For a debate between the 'modernists' and the 'post-primordialists' (as a term to refer to Antonhy Smith and others), see The Warwick debates on Nationalism between Smith and Gellner, in *Nations and Nationalism 2 (3),* 1996.

5 As argued by Vanaik (1997: 31), this cultural struggle is more visible in the 'new' nations, such as India, where nation-formation has been more directly tied to a national movement that has attempted to create a national identity based on some kind of indigenous cultural roots. Hence, in India, Hindu nationalism was important in promoting national identity, but it was not the only factor and it was constantly contested in its definitions of what constituted Indian culture and history. In other words, there is always a cultural struggle involved in the creation of the nation or nationality.

6 This is not to say that religion and nationalism overlap as territorial entities, rather it is to point out that they have in common a territorial aspect, which in the case of the nation refers to territorial borders, while in case of religion refers to bounded entities such as churches or political parties. In some cases these may of course overlap and many states have an explicit state-religion.

7 To be ontologically secure and avoid existential anxiety means to Giddens (1991: 51–3) that we can provide 'answers' to fundamental existential questions, such as those outlined here.

8 I agree with Nandy's statement that increased secularism may threaten religious or other cultural values in any society. However, I disagree with his argument that secularism as an ideology can thrive only in non-secular societies – a statement I find too simplistic to reflect the multitude of non-religious values held by many people and societies.

9 The attack on the twin towers, for instance, can be seen as an attack on a building, symbolizing the anti-thesis of the values of Islam (seen in the eyes of the attackers), personifying the moral decay of the West with the US as its main representative.

10 In addition to this version of tolerant masculinity, Hindu nationalists have been preoccupied with comparing themselves to the ‘over-sexualized’ masculinity of the Muslims. In this sense, Hindus have been portrayed as lesser sexualized beings in India at the same time as Hindus have often been depicted as feminine in the colonial West. This anxiety of a comparatively less potent Hindu maleness is also related to the rise of women in the Hindu nationalist movement. As explained by Manisha Sethi (2002: 1548): ‘By their (Hindu mothers and wives) courageous and brave deeds, they were to strike terror in the hearts of the Muslims and evoke awe and inspire action among the Hindu. As wives their bravery was to shame and shake their men out of slothful cowardliness by putting into question their masculinity and ability to protect their women and religion. /…/ As mothers, they were perfectly suited to nurture in the young, the qualities of fearlessness, patriotism, love for the nation and of course hate for the Muslim’.

4 Situating Sikh and Hindu nationalism in India

1 Some relevant public opinion survey data are now available. In answer to the question ‘Do you think your vote has an effect on how things are run in this country, or do you think your vote makes no difference?’ 59 percent of the respondents in 1996 said their votes ‘has an effect’ (up from 49 percent in 1971), and 21 percent said it makes no difference. To the question of whether government would be run better ‘without parties or assemblies and elections’ the response was: 11 percent agreed and 69 percent disagreed. All of this confirms the judgment of observers in election after election that the commitment to democratic functioning in India has increased and is very high. These polls were conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Studies in Delhi in 1967, 1971, 1996 and 1998. The results were published at the time of the election in the newsmagazine *India Today* in 1998, with analysis done by Yogendra Yadav and his colleagues, and in Mitra and Singh, 1999. See Politics and Society, ‘The Thirteenth Election of India’s Lok Sabha’ (House of the People), Philip Oldenberg, Columbia University, September 1999, Asia society publications, http://www.asiasociety.org/publications/indian_elections.13.htm. To this should be added the results of the elections on May 13, 2004, which showed that poor people are perfectly conscious of their democratic rights and will continue to vote out parties that do not fulfil their promises. BJP became acutely aware of this in the 2004 elections when it lost to the Congress Party. These elections will be further discussed in chapter seven.

2 The term ‘communalism’ is almost invariably used in an Indian context, and will also be used in this book to refer to hostility expressed on behalf of different groups towards each other. The term brings to the fore the sectarian politics of community-based shared experiences and beliefs, regardless of whether such beliefs are based on religious, nationalist, linguistic, caste, or other cultural constructs.

3 For extended accounts of the liberalization process in India, see , Kapila 2002, Kurien 1994 and Pathy 1995, Mathew 1995, Panini 1995, Sengupta 2001, Swamy 2000, Thakur 1993. See also a special issue on money, banking and finance in *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 29–February 4, 2000, and *SAR Economist*, March 2002, which deals with the Union Budget 2002–03.

4 See Manners’ (2000), discussion of how issues can progress from having had ‘merely’ symbolic value to become issues of substance guiding political decision-making.

5 Mahmood (1996) and Pettigrew (1995) are good examples of this view. As such they both tend to represent somewhat primordialized versions of Sikh nationalism.

6 Both Kohli (1990) and Brass (1991) are quite representative of this latter view, which is more in accordance with an instrumentalist version. For understanding Sikh identity formation in general, see for example, Akbar 1985, Deol 2000, Kapur 1986, Kaur 1991, Grewal 1994, 1998, Oberoi 1994, Purewal 2000, Puri 1984.

7 For details of the gurdwara reform movement, see Singh 1983: 63–76. The British, in order to appease a section of the leadership of the Akali movement and win them over, introduced the Gurdwara Act of 1925. By this act, control of the gurdwaras was handed over to gurdwara committees. The Akalis made these committees their base, and the breeding ground for Akali control. The introduction of the Gurdwara Act was thus not an innocent action on the part of the British: the intention was to set up a separate Sikh political force which would counter the democratic forces. It gave a standing base to a political party formed on religious lines. See 'All India Federation of Organisations for Democratic Rights 1987, *Punjab – People Fight Back (a report to the nation),* pp. 16–18. From now on shortened to AIFODR.

8 For an extensive account of the Punjabi Suba Movement, see Satya Pal Dang 1983: 151–65. See also Narang 1981b, Puri 1989.

9 As the Shah Commission set up by the Union Home Minister was in disagreement, in regard to whether Chandigarh should go to Punjab or to Haryana, the government decided to make it a Union Territory instead. Chandigarh, a new city built in the 1950s to replace Lahore, was thus declared the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. This, together with the demands for a restoration of Punjab's control of power and water resources (75 per cent of the river waters of Punjab were being allocated to other states as arranged and regulated by the central government (Deol 2000: 102), resulted in a protest-fast by Sant Fateh Singh.

10 See *The Draft of the New Policy Programme of the Shiromani Akali Dal*, 1977. See also Deol (2000) and Puri (1984), who discuss the draft in relation to what the Akalis really wanted.

11 Although never officially acknowledged, many have pointed to the recruitment of Bhrindranwale into politics by Sanjay Gandhi after his mother's fall from power in 1977. See e.g. Akbar 1985, Kohli 1990, Wallace 1989.

12 Since its formation, the structural basic unit for the RSS has been the *shakha* (literally, 'branch'), which is a group consisting of around 50 persons – mostly children and adolescents – who assemble daily for sessions of ideological education and ritualized physical training. Members (*swayamsevaks*) from the upper castes are dominating these assemblies, although one also finds people from the peasantry as well as from the Dalits (formerly Untouchables). The aim of the *shakha* is to become the focus of unification for the Hindu nation, which implies that caste boundaries have to be crossed for the higher good. See Jaffrelot 1996: 192–3; see also Bhatt and Mukta 2000.

13 It is, however, possible to trace Hindu nationalism more explicitly to the colonial era as Gould (2004) has done. Gould analyzes how Hindu nationalism affected the supposedly secularist Congress in the key state of Uttar Pradesh in the late colonial era. In doing this Gould offers an alternative assessment of how the relationship between Congress and north Indian Muslims changed in the years leading up to the partition.

14 It is interesting to note that the VHP has undertaken this mission by imitating the ecclesiastical structure characteristic of the Semitic religions as a means to resist them more effectively. See Jaffrelot 1996: 193.

15 The 'brotherhood' of interconnected Hindu nationalist groups affiliated with the RSS, which includes the BJP, VHP and others – also known as the RSS family.

16 Mazzini was an Italian nationalist who in exile founded the nationalist movement *Giovane Italia* (Young Italy) in 1831. He acted as a focus for the movement of Italian unity. The 'threatening other' in his writings consisted of capitalism and France.

17 See Jaffrelot 1996: 11–33. The tendency by Savarkar to be influenced by fascism in his later writings obviously had little to do with Mazzini's texts. For general accounts of Hindu nationalism see, for example, Basu 1996, Bidwai *et al.* 1996, Blom Hansen and Jaffrelot, 1998, Bose and Jalal 1997, Sarkar 1996, van der Veer, 1996.

18 For specific accounts of the Ayodhya issue, see for example, Bose 1997, Chatterjee 1996, Davis 1996, Desai 2002, Dutta and Sarkar 1994, Gopal 1991, Ludden 1996.

19 The *ramjanmabhoomi* movement was a VHP-based political movement that claimed that the *Babri Masjid* (mosque) was the site of the mythological God Rama's birthplace. This led to the destruction of the *Babri Masjid* in 1992 and was accompanied by a world-wide movement to build a temple to Rama on the site.

20 For details on the Mandal Commission, or the process usually referred to as Manadalization, see van der Veer 1996: 2–7; see also Asian Survey 1993, Basu 1994.

21 The cover of the 15 May 1991 issue of *India Today* shows Lal Kishnan Advani imitating the icon of *kodanda* Rama, the god Rama with bow and arrows. See van der Veer 1996: 2–7. See also Davis' (1996: 27–54) interesting account of how Advani manipulated the iconography of Rama's chariot.

22 The BJP progressed from 85 to 129 seats and from 11.36 per cent to 20.08 per cent of the valid votes. At an all-India level the party benefited from the fact that since 1989 40 million 18–21-year-olds, among whom the BJP was relatively popular, were now enfranchised. However, as noted by Jaffrelot (1996: 438–48), the pattern differed greatly from one state to another and also other factors played a role in the electoral success of the BJP.

23 The participation of the police in attacks on Muslims has also been documented in other areas, for example in the east Delhi neighbourhood. See van der Veer 1996: 7.

24 See Christophe Jaffrelot (1999: 191), who argues that the fear in the 1920s was that Hinduism would be drowned not only by a 'Christianization' of India, but even more quickly by the expansion of Islam, of which the Khilafat movement of the 1920s bore testimony according to Hindu nationalists. This movement was launched against the British in 1919 by some eminent Muslims. However, in some instances the movement resulted in anti-Hindu riots.

25 See Savarkar's claim that all residents of India are not Hindus, for the Hindus are not 'merely the citizens of the Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of the above of the love they bear to common motherland but also by the bonds of a common blood. All Hindus claim to have in their veins the blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic fathers, the Sindhus', V.D. Sarvarkar, *Hindutva*, Delhi, 1989 Edition, pp.115–16, in Panikkar 1997: xi.

26 As noted by Amartya Sen after the destruction of the Babri mosque: 'Hindu activists have yet to confront the fact that even among religious Hindus, many would dispute Rama's divinity'. Quoted in Kolodner 1995.

27 Conversions to Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism have never been objected to by the Hindu mainstream (at least not until the eighties concerning the Sikhs) as all these are viewed as being of Indian origin and therefore encompassed within Hinduism (see Oommen 1994). In contrast, conversions to Islam and Christianity have always been of contentious nature, as they represented conversions to religions of alien origin. An overwhelming majority of those who embraced Islam and Christianity were from the lowest rung of the social ladder – ex-untouchables and tribals – who were also the earliest inhabitants of India.

28 Sikhs who keep their hair long and observes the other symbols of the *Khalsa* are referred to as *Keshdhari*.

29 See Kolodner (1995), who makes this argument in relation to the transformation of the term 'Hindu'. The term 'Hindu', he argues, was invented over two thousand years ago by invaders to classify a people living within the Indus valley, and was unrelated to religious belief or practice. The British colonialists inherited this categorization and employed it, not as a geographical term but as a religious one. In their attempts to define, divide and conquer, the British were the first to divide the census according to religion. The Government of India Act of 1935 thus provided separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims and religious identity became more prominent than other identity constructions. Paradoxically, as noted by Kolodner, the terminology used by Hindu leaders to unify 'Hindus' was originally employed to divide the same population.

30 Landless labourers in rural India usually belong to the former 'untouchable castes', which today are named the 'Scheduled Castes' as they figure in a schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Indian government gave these ex-untouchable castes quota representation proportionate to their population (around 14 per cent of the entire Indian population) in public sector jobs and in educational state institutions. This was done as a way to help them advance in the secular, economic sphere. A similar pattern of caste reservations has benefited the 'Backward Castes', which refer to the more prosperous agrarian castes who believe themselves to be socially backwards. These were given reservations in 1989 by the Indian government (see Gupta 2002).

31 Politically, economically and numerically, Jats – and after 1966, Sikh Jats – are often the single most important group at the village level. Both caste and class considerations are involved as Scheduled castes perceive Jats to be economically dominant in regard to rural landed relationships and caste enemies. They therefore tend to oppose major political parties in which Jats are dominant (see Wallace 1989). For a general understanding of the role of caste in Indian politics, see Kothari 1995.

32 Quoted in Chadda 1997: 52–3. See also *The Draft of The New Policy Programme of The Shiromani Akali Dal*, Amritsar, 1977. The texts of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution are further reproduced in *Punjab: Context and Trends* (Chandigarh: Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 1984).

33 Quoted from *The Draft of The New Policy Programme of The Shiromani Akali Dal*, Amritsar, 1977.

34 From *Two Talks Between Sant Fateh Singh Ji and Lal Bahadur Shastri*, 7–8 August 1965 (Amritsar: Shiromani Akali Dal), in Puri 1984. See also Puri 1986 and 1994.

35 From *The Draft of The New Policy Programme of The Shiromani Akali Dal*, Amritsar, 1977.

36 The leadership had a different resolution on state autonomy passed at the 18th All India Akali Conference, held at Ludhiana on October 28–9, 1978.

37 See also Panikkar's (1997: 165) discussion of similarities between Hindu fundamentalism and fascism: that propaganda must necessarily be deflected from discursive thinking, it must be oriented psychologically and has to mobilize irrational, unconscious, regressive processes.

38 Here it should be noted that Islam was seen as a tolerant institution by the British East India Company as long as it was not perceived as a threat. After the defeat of the Mughul empire, Hindus replaced Muslims as representatives of tolerance.

39 See Oommen 1994, Panikkar 1997, van der Veer 1996.

40 See Kolodner 1995, who further argues that: 'The hierarchical, anti-egalitarian, and divisive nature of the caste system runs directly counter to contemporary leaders' attempts to mobilize a mass movement'.

41 For some detailed accounts on Indian secularism and its impact on religious nationalism, see for example, Bhargava 1994, Chopra 1994, Hans 1991, Panikkar 1997.

42 See Kolodner 1995, who further argues that Gandhi attempted to broker a compromise between secular and religious forces by applying Hindu ethical norms of *satyagraha* (the force of truth) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) to the nationalist movement.

43 See note 24.

44 The term *Khalistan* was, however, first coined by Dr. V.S. Bhatti to describe an independent Sikh state in March 1940 in response to the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution. In Bhatti's pamphlet called *Khalistan*, he envisioned a theocratic state similar to the 'Muslim' Pakistan (see Riar 1996).

5 Globalization, modernity and the limitations of Sikh nationalism

1 The number of Christian converts rose, for instance, from 3,912 in 1881 to over 19,000 ten years later (Deol 2000: 67).

2 Here it should be noted, however, that also those scholars belonging to the constructivist critics, such as Oberoi, have been accused of a different kind of primordialism. As Anne Murphy (2002: 63) notes; 'Oberoi's construction of the Khalsa's 'Other' often falls into a nostalgic and (as the noted scholar of communalism Gyanendra Pandey has described it) quasi-nationalist narrative. Here the motif of the folk functions as an alternative to the 'bad' development of Sikh identity, which must be explained away and understood as aberration. With this characterization of Sikh identity, we see the erasure of contestations which exist in relation to hegemonies of different sorts, related not only to religion, but also caste and class'. This can be compared to Desai's (2002) criticism of Ashis Nandy in regards to his search for a Hinduism that differs from that of Hindu nationalism.

3 For an overview of the Green Revolution, see Deol 2000, Jeffrey 1994, Puri 1983, Purewal 2000, Sharma 1981.

4 These and the following figures are mostly taken from the *Statistical Abstract of Punjab* between the years of 1971 and 1992 (Chandigarh: Government of Punjab), as reported in, among others, Puri 1983 and Purewal 2000.

5 See India, *A Reference Annual*, 1977 and 1978 (New Delhi: Government of India 1978). See also Jeffrey 1994: 81–3.

6 See Bhalla and Chadda's study of the *Green Revolution and the Small Peasant: A Study of Income Distribution Among Punjab Cultivators*, as analyzed in Deol 2000: 133–5.

7 As reported by *Times of India*, June 9, 1980. In Puri 1983: 103.

8 The extent to which this is the case has been debated. Hence Himmat Singh (2001) argues that some observers of Punjab politics in the 1970s and the 1980s found that agricultural growth had been accompanied by rising employment, as well as a reduction in some aspects of inequality and in the percentage of people living below the poverty line. In relation to this other scholars have argued that wage rates in real terms had risen substantially or at least remained constant, despite the influx of labour from other states (see e.g. Dasgupta 1977, Singh 2001, Westly 1986).

9 Shinder Purewal (2000) discusses at length how political gangsterism was a by-product of what he calls 'predatory capitalism', by which he refers to the decision by Indira Gandhi to allow inflow of foreign capital under state command which produced a licence permit culture; the licence permit raj. The permits were freely given to those with political power and were obtained by paying massive bribes to Congress leaders and bureaucrats. It had a spin-off effect, with the emergence of an underground economy dealing in everything from drugs and weapon smuggling to urban real estate manipulation and police protection.

10 Baptism into the Khalsa tradition.

11 Sikhs who keep their hair long and observe the other symbols of the *Khalsa* are referred to as *Keshdhari*. In comparison, *Sehajdhari*, or the slow adopters, refers to those Sikhs who do not observe the unshorn hair of the Khalsa nor accept the Khalsa normative order instituted by the last Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

12 An endearment term for Sant Bhindranwale.

13 The main difference between orthodox Sikhs and the Nirankaris is that, while the former recognize only ten gurus symbolized in the *Granth Sahib*, the Nirankaris recognize a succession of gurus, which means they worship a living guru. The Nirankaris also have two sacred texts of their own, which are viewed as offensive by the orthodox. The Nirankaris were declared renegades by the SGPC in November 1973 and ever since there have been a number of clashes between orthodox Sikhs and the Nirankaris. The 1978 incident (referred to earlier) – the confrontation between followers of Bhindranwale and the Nirankaris that resulted in more than a dozen people being killed – has by many been regarded as the actual starting point of the violence that followed. As the Nirankaris charged with murder were acquitted on the grounds that they

had acted in self-defence, the actions against them and their sympathizers took a violent turn (see Akbar 1985, Jeffrey 1994, K. Singh 1992).

14 One of the five essential symbols of the Khalsa faith.

15 A number of authors have provided different reasons to why people were rallying around Bhindranwale and his notion of a separate Sikh state. Keppley Mahmood (1996), for instance, argues that the uprising in Punjab was a reaction to the long-term aspirations by the Hindus to dominate culturally and religiously, combined with the fact that Sikhism corresponded with a physical region dominated by one language, Punjabi. Oberoi (1987), in comparison, traces the demands of the Sikhs for an independent state to the Muslim demands for an independent Pakistan achieved in 1947. Juergensmeyer (1994) argues that Bhindranwale was seen as a religious alternative to the corruption of secular leaders and that it was part of a greater movement in the world, where religious nationalism has become manifest in various forms of fundamentalism. And Pritam Singh (1987) sees the economic and cultural changes in Punjab as resulting in a dislocation of traditional forms of life and leading to a moral vacuum. In response to this 'cultural trauma', religious nationalism provided appealing answers (see Chohan & Geaves 2002). My argument falls somewhere in between that of Jurgensmeyer and Singh, although I put greater stress on the psychological dimensions of these arguments.

16 The Gadr movement started in 1913 and was an attempt among Indian emigrants to North America to strive for Indian independence. Many overseas Sikhs joined the movement, which in many ways fractured the previously harmonious relationship between the British and the Sikhs. The movement was crushed on 21 February 1915. For further information on these events see Deol 2000, Grewal 1994, Jeffrey 1994, Singh Tatla 1999.

17 For details on any of these events in relation to the Sikh diaspora, see Singh Tatla 1999, Deol 2000, Axel 2001, Shani 2002, Gayer 2002. Shani (2002: 197–8) limits the number of events to two, the partition and the attack on the Golden Temple. He refers to these two events as the two 'holocausts' the Sikhs have experienced and argues that the concept of the *ghallughara* (holocaust) looms large in the Sikh diaspora consciousness.

18 The exemption for *Keshdhari* Sikh motorcycle riders to wear a crash helmet (the Religious Excemption Act). This was viewed as a victory for the separate identity of the Sikhs and helped to create boundaries between Sikhs and other South Asian minorities. The turban issue arose again when a student's application was turned down as the headteacher knew he was going to wear a turban. This became a major case in the House of Lords and was resolved in favour of the Sikhs. The use of protective work equipment launched by the European Union in the 1990s has continued to meet resistance by the turban-wearing Sikhs (see Shani 2002: 202, Singh Tatla 1999: 100–1).

19 A major controversy was created, for instance, concerning the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCPM). Baltej Singh Dhillon qualified for enlistment in the RCPM in 1991, but his turban created a national debate with petitions and several court rulings and, after almost five years of struggle, the court ruled in July 1994 that Sikh Mounties had the right to wear a turban (Singh Tatla 1999: 101–3).

20 Six organizations based in the diaspora have been particularly proactive in lobbying host governments and international organizations in favour of the *Khalistan* movement. These are the Khalistan Council (founded in 1980 in Punjab but led from London by J.S. Chauhan); the Dal Khalsa (founded in Punjab in 1978, but based in Britain); the Babbar Khalsa (founded in Punjab in 1978, based in Britain and Canada); the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF, founded in 1984 in Britain and now active in the UK, Canada, the US and Pakistan); the World Sikh Organization (WSO, founded in New York 1984, operating in the US, Canada and, to a lesser extent, the UK); and finally, the Council of Khalistan (founded in 1987 in the US by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh).

21 See for example Deol 2000, Jeffrey 1994, Mahmood 1996, Singh 1992, Singh Tatla 1999.
22 See the theoretical discussion of social identity theory and social categorization theory.
23 'A great tree falls' refers to the assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi.
24 In an earlier piece (Kinnvall 2002a) I argued that it was among the educated youth on the countryside that the terrorists could find their support, based on Kushwant Singh's (1984: 23) statement that it was 'the educated unemployed Sikh youth who became pliable material in the hands of Marxists or Sikh fundamentalists'. However, as Wallace (1989) has noted, there were a number of young Sikhs in the countryside who competed unsuccessfully with urban youth for the entrance into higher education. These were likely to be marginally educated and constituted a potential group for mobilization.
25 See, for example, Brass 1991, Kohli 1990, Purewal 2000.
26 Pettigrew further argues that' Sikhism does not lend itself easily to the formation of the state, and it is very difficult to equate peoplehood and nationality in their case'. See Pettigrew 1987, Oberoi 1987, cf. Chadda 1997.

6 Globalization, modernity and the power of Hindu nationalism

1 See Joshi and Little (1994).
2 This term referred to the boycott of British textiles during the colonial period and was then used by the nationalist movement to promote self-sufficiency in opposition to globalization (see Jaffrelot 2002).
3 The extent to which general poverty is decreasing as a result of the economic reforms is discussed further in the section below on liberalization and its effects.
4 Thakurs are high-caste Hindus.
5 Local representative committee elected by several villages.
6 See for instance the Delhi Historians' Group's publication: *Communalisation of Education: The History Textbooks Controversy* (2001), where a number of prominent historians describe how the RSS/Hindu communal forces have used government institutions and state power to attack secular history and historians and promote an 'obscurantist, backward looking communal historiography' (Mukherjee & Mukherjee 2001: 2). Within this context the NCERT (National Council of Education, Research and Training) introduced a new National Curriculum Framework, which attempted to take history out of school books until class X, at the same time as it launched an attack on some of India's most acclaimed historians, such as R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, Satish Chandra, Bipan Chandra and the former director of the NCERT, Arjun Dev, with the backing of the former education minister. So for instance did the NCERT ask the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) to remove passages from history books written by Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Arjun Dev. As the editor of the Hindustan Times, Vir Sanghvi, notes, the aim was clearly to Hinduize history regardless of various other pretexts. Hence the CBSE wanted 50 words that suggested that Vedic Aryans ate beef to be deleted, while other deletions related to the difficulties in locating the historical Ram and Krishna, the existence of the 23 Jain Tirthankaras who preceded Mahavir and the exploitation of the lower castes under the caste system. Vir Sanghvi (2001: 31–4), refers to the entire process as an attempt to 'talibanise our education'.
7 Although not among the Delhi Historians' Group, who are represented by scholars such as Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra, Irfan Habib, Satish Chandra, Arjun Dev and Sumit Sarkar.
8 The neo-Gandhian cultural nationalists have in common with the Hindu nationalists an anti-secular view. But, in opposition to the Hindu nationalists, the cultural nationalists must separate religion into its tainted and untainted parts, where the latter is used as a

defence against the former: 'i.e. the *ethical resources* of religion constitute the most important armoury of weapons for resistance to communalism. It is the "good" politics of religious appeal versus the "bad" politics of religious appeal, and isn't the Mahatma an exemplar of the effectiveness of this strategy?' (Vanaik 1997: 41).

9 Disinvestment has been attempted as a strategy to meet budgetary targets, as well as to expose PSU's to market discipline, such as profits and shareholder returns. It is necessary to differentiate between disinvestments and privatization, where disinvestments refer to the continued but restructured role of the public sector where it will continue to play an important part of the privatized economy (Kapila 2002: 370). For a comprehensive overview of the effects of liberalization in India, see *the South Asia* Vol. XXIII, Special Issue (2000), where the articles by Patnaik, Wadhva and Shand and Bhide are of special interest. For more extensive accounts; see also Kapila 2002, Sengupta 2001, Swami 2000.

10 Refers to the over-regulated economic system that especially characterized the grassroots levels of bureaucracy, where the so called 'license-permit-inspector' (raj) was responsible for delays and often of harassment of both citizens and investors.

11 After attaining peak performance in 1995–96, the growth rate of the industrial sector has declined steadily. From a high of 13.2 per cent in 1995–96, it declined to a low 4.6 per cent and data from 1999–2000 show no improvement (Swami 2000: 112, 138).

12 The UN Human Development Report from 2003 confirms these figures. In 1990 imports were 10 per cent of GDP, while exports were 7 per cent. By 2001 imports had increased to 15 per cent of the GDP, while exports had doubled to 14 per cent of the GDP.

13 The study was conducted by Dr. S.P. Gupta, Member of the Planning Commission, Government of India. It was presented in a paper entitled 'Globalization, Economic Reform and the role of Labour', paper for ILO National Workshop on Economic Reforms and Labour: Lessons for India from the East Asian Experience, New Delhi, May 1999. There are a variety of different measures of poverty, however, and looking at the basic indicators of human development it is not at all clear that poverty has deteriorated during the decade of economic reforms. So for instance does the UN Human Development Index value on 'quality of life' in India show an increase from 0.519 in 1990 to 0.590 in 2001.

14 Activists from the *Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh* (BMS) were responsible for launching the *Swadeshi Jagaran Manch* to fight for economic nationalism (see Hansen 1998: 301).

15 Looking at the rapid changes taking place in major Indian cities, however, this statement may not entirely reflect current reality as Western cafés, bars and clothing (for women) are becoming increasingly visible.

16 Desai makes a powerful argument against Ashis Nandy's neo-Gandhianism, which she argues conjures with a number of *Hindutva* claims in relation to history, myths and secularism. In Nandy's world tradition is per definition good while secularism is a concept too implicated by Western standards. 'The old ideology of secularism is not working in India because secularism is a Western concept, unsuited to the Indian genius, whose deep religiosity needs to be publicly and politically expressed' (Nandy, as quoted and paraphrased by Desai 2002: 115).

17 The last few years have also seen increasing attacks against the Christian minority community; see Ali Engineer 2000, Zavos 2001.

18 On February 27, the Sabermati Express pulled out of Godhra railway station. As it left, the train was stoned by an angry mob and, some twenty minutes later, a coach had been burned to ashes along with fifty-eight helpless passengers. Who the attackers were are unknown but somebody decided that all Muslims had to be taught a lesson. 'Retaliation' was swift and merciless, even clinical, and over the next few days close to 2000 Muslims were killed throughout the state. For full descriptions, eye witness accounts and thorough analyses, see Sondhi and Mukarji (2002), and Varadarajan (2002).

19 New Delhi, Vol. IV, No.1. January–March 2002.
20 See Varadarajan for a number of historical and contemporary examples. The danger is of course that, by providing selective markers, media contribute to an extremely distorted picture of communal violence. 'Even though 90 per cent of the victims in a riot are Muslims, the fact that their names are not reported when the names of a few Hindu victims are, can create a false and dangerous impression of Muslim aggressiveness' (quoted in Varadarajan 1999: 194–5).
21 See for instance *Gujarat Samachar*, 26 June, 1998; *Nav Gujarat Times*, 18 July, 1998; *Gujarat Samachar*, 29 June, 1998. For a more detailed account of these stories, see Varadarajan 1999.
22 *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 April, 2002.
23 As reported in *Economic & Political Weekly*, 6 April, 2002 – in this article only 700 people were, however, estimated to have been killed. This figure has later been revised.
24 As reported in the *Hindustan Times*, 4 March, 2002.
25 As quoted in the *Financial Times*, Wednesday, January 19, 2005.
26 The Report of Human Rights Watch on the Gujarat Riots, in Sondhi and Mukarji 2002: 235.
27 The Report of Human Rights Watch on the Gujarat Riots, in Sondhi and Mukarji 2002: 236; see also *Outlook*, December 16, 2002.
28 Reported in 'Rights and Wrongs: Ordeal by fire in the killing fields of Gujarat, Editors Guild Fact Finding Report', New Delhi, May 3, 2002, p. 3, in Pinto 2002: 293.
29 See *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6–12 January, 2001, *Economist*, 16 December, 2000.
30 Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). N.d. *The Hindu Awakening: Retrospect and Promise*. New Delhi, as reported in *Hindustan Times*, March 25, 2003.

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